

## ASIA ADVENTURES RESPONSIBLE TOURISM POLICY

As Asia Adventures is located in the country of our main service focus we are in the special position of being able to most effectively implement our Responsible Tourism Policy. Being locally based also means we are best placed to ensure that the suppliers we choose to work with act in accordance with Responsible Tourism principles.

Asia Adventures recognises that the environments, cultures, and economies of many of the geographic areas in which we conduct our business are fragile, requiring a sustained commitment to ensure that any visits have a lasting positive effect. The principles of Responsible Tourism are intrinsic in how Asia Adventures operates as we believe this approach can positively assist local communities, providing income, positive cultural exchange and the financial incentive to protect the areas natural environments and cultural traditions.

Asia Adventures Responsible Tourism Policy is based around our aim of being a socially responsible business engaged in the conservation and protection of the environment, local communities, and cultural heritage. In addition we support pro-poor tourism and strive to utilise tourism as a tool for poverty alleviation.

Asia Adventures focuses on 'small group tourism' and 'tailor-made travel' which we believe is more suited to the principles of Responsible Tourism environmentally, socially, and economically.

While our overall aim is to utilise local suppliers where possible, and the majority of our suppliers (hotels, vehicle providers, guides and other suppliers) are local people or predominately employ local people, there are occasions where we believe it is more beneficial to work with a responsible foreign owned supplier then with an irresponsible local supplier.

Below we state the fundamentals of our Responsible Tourism policy categorised into **environmental**, **social**, and **economic** policies. However, we appreciate that in reality there is often an over-lap between these policy areas.

### ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

Asia Adventures Responsible Tourism environmental policy is to:

- aim to continually improve our performance towards promoting sustainability and related environmental issues;
- conduct our business in a way that minimises negative environmental impacts and raises awareness of Responsible Tourism and environmental good practice among staff, clients, suppliers, and local communities;
- strive to ensure that our services and activities create the lowest possible negative impact on the environment;
- aim to continually improve performance towards the prevention of pollution and the degradation of the environment in areas where we operate;
- strive to minimise waste (particularly plastic) in all our activities, and recycle where practical, in addition have a zero litter policy on all our tours;
- support conservation projects carried out in participation with local communities in areas visited by our clients;

- encourage our staff, clients, suppliers and local communities to minimise water consumption;
- encourage our staff, clients, suppliers and local communities to minimise energy consumption (e.g. turn off lights, air conditioning, computers, TVs etc. when not in use);
- encourage our staff, suppliers and local communities to minimise atmospheric pollution;
- encourage our clients to make use of environmentally friendly transport options such as bicycles (traditional & electric), and cyclos where available (cyclo drivers tend to be socio-economically disadvantaged, hence this option also has social and economic benefits);
- make use of modern IT technology to minimise printed material (we have a 'no brochure' policy with all our tour information being available on-line), and where printing is undertaken to use the most environmentally friendly option locally available;
- continually source and promote community based tourism, environmental, and other 'good cause' projects which our clients may visit. Many of our tours include options to visit local schools, orphanages, handicraft producers (often employing landmine victims, the disabled, vulnerable women, and other disadvantaged social groups), animal sanctuaries, hospitality training centres for former street children etc;
- use and recommend restaurants & retail outlets which directly benefit local communities. For example, restaurants which train former street children, and handicraft shops which uphold the values of 'Fair Trade' (i.e. employing socially & economically disadvantaged individuals, paying a fair wage, providing safe and healthy working conditions, produce products in a way that minimises environmental degradation etc);
- recommend a variety of homestays for our guests who are interested, believing that not only does the money from homestays directly benefit the local community, but guests gain an authentic insight into traditional lifestyles.
- carry out surveys to assess accommodation providers commitment to the principles of Responsible Tourism, and favour accommodation which has an environmental policy in place, which addresses issues such as, re-using towels and sheets, electricity and water usage, waster management etc;
- continue to be an active member of CCBEN (Cambodia Community Based Eco-tourism Network). For more information see [www.ccben.org](http://www.ccben.org);
- continue to fulfil the criteria to be accredited a Heritage Friendly Business – Gold Status, by the NGO Heritage Watch. For more information see [www.heritagewatch.org](http://www.heritagewatch.org);
- form partnerships with, and support NGOs (Non Governmental Organisations) which are working in the area of environmental conservation, and allow our clients to learn more about this work and visit project areas where practical;
- advocate for the inclusion of Responsible Tourism environmental principles in governmental policies at all levels, and lobby the tourism industry to fully embrace those principles.

## SOCIAL POLICY

Asia Adventures Responsible Tourism social policy is to:

- aim to continually improve our performance towards promoting sustainability and related social issues;
- conduct our business in a way that minimises negative social impacts and raises awareness of Responsible Tourism and social good practice among staff, clients, suppliers, and local communities;
- strive to ensure that our services and activities create the lowest possible negative impact on social issues;
- support conservation projects carried out in participation with local communities in areas visited by our clients;
- continually source and promote community based tourism, environmental, and other 'good cause' projects which our clients may visit. Many of our tours include options to visit local schools, orphanages, handicraft producers (often employing landmine victims, the disabled, vulnerable women, and other disadvantaged social groups), animal sanctuaries, hospitality training centres for former street children etc;

- use and recommend restaurants & retail outlets which directly benefit local communities. For example, restaurants which train former street children, and handicraft shops which uphold the values of 'Fair Trade' (i.e. employing socially & economically disadvantaged individuals, paying a fair wage, providing safe and healthy working conditions, produce products in a way that minimises environmental degradation etc);
- recommend a variety of homestays for our guests who are interested, believing that not only does the money from homestays directly benefit the local community, but guests gain an authentic insight into traditional lifestyles;
- encourage our clients to make use of traditional transport such as cyclos where available (cyclo drivers tend to be socio-economically disadvantaged, hence this option also has social and economic benefits);
- ensure that our operations do not disrupt or lead to the displacement of local people, and ensure that our type and scale of tourism is appropriate to local conditions and operates within the limits set by local appropriate infrastructure and carrying capacity;
- continue to be an active member of CCBEN (Cambodia Community Based Eco-tourism Network). For more information see [www.ccben.org](http://www.ccben.org);
- continue to fulfil the criteria to be accredited a Heritage Friendly Business – Gold Status, by the NGO Heritage Watch. For more information see [www.heritagewatch.org](http://www.heritagewatch.org);
- form partnerships with and support NGOs (Non Governmental Organisations) which are working in the area of local community / social development / empowerment, and allow our guests to learn more about this work and visit project areas where practical;
- continue and expand our 'Pedal2Empower' charitable social project. See [www.pedal2empower.org](http://www.pedal2empower.org) for more information;
- advocate for the inclusion of Responsible Tourism social principles in governmental policies at all levels, and lobby the tourism industry to fully embrace those principles.

## ECONOMIC POLICY

Asia Adventures Responsible Tourism economic policy is to:

- aim to continually improve our performance towards promoting sustainability and related economic issues;
- conduct our business in a way that minimises negative economic impacts and raises awareness of Responsible Tourism and economic good practice among staff, clients, suppliers, and local communities;
- strive to ensure that our services and activities create the lowest possible negative impact on economic issues;
- contribute economically to local communities by purchasing locally grown / produced products where possible;
- encourage our clients to use restaurants & retail outlets which economically benefit local communities. For example, restaurants which train / employ former street children, and handicraft shops which uphold the values of 'Fair Trade' (i.e. employing socially & economically disadvantaged individuals, paying a fair wage, providing safe and healthy working conditions, produce products in a way that minimises environmental degradation etc);
- encourage our clients to make use of traditional transport such as cyclos where available (cyclo drivers tend to be socio-economically disadvantaged, hence this option also has social and economic benefits);
- recommend a variety of homestays for our guests who are interested, believing that not only do guests gain an authentic insight into traditional lifestyles, but the money from homestays directly benefit the local community;
- suggest, where possible, locally owned accommodation rather than large international chains. This ensures that as much tourist revenue as possible remains in the host country as well as providing more character for our guests;
- advise on a tipping policy for local guides and drivers which rewards excellent service;

- intentionally avoid the traits of 'mass tourism' such as organised shopping stops (often commission based), dining exclusively at hotel restaurants, and sightseeing from large buses only. We believe 'small group tourism' is more economically beneficial to local communities;
- encourage our clients to explore away from the tourist 'hot-spots' to areas not so often visited, thus the tourist expenditure benefits broader geographic areas, rather than the more popular tourist destinations alone;
- continue to be an active member of CCBEN (Cambodia Community Based Eco-tourism Network). For more information see [www.ccben.org](http://www.ccben.org);
- advocate for the inclusion of Responsible Tourism economic principles in governmental policies at all levels, and lobby the tourism industry to fully embrace those principles.

To help us ensure that we are doing all we practically can to support Responsible Tourism in the countries in which Asia Adventures operates all our clients are given a 'Feedback Form' which allows them the opportunity to comment on our Responsible Tourism approach and suggest how it may be improved.

'...take only photographs leave only footprints...'

