



## **Development Together Pty. Ltd.**

### **RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL POLICY**

Development Together is committed to maintaining our integrity, living Our values and ensuring that We're fulfilling the core purpose of our business. We wish to operate in a responsible manner, incorporating the principles of sustainable development in the way we provide our Participants with real life experiences. However, these values are more than just words on a page; they are ingrained in the culture and daily operations of every Development Together staff member, office and placement.

We expect Our staff and participants to demonstrate the principles of Responsible Travel - respecting people, cultures and local environments; in the distribution of wealth; in good will and cross-cultural sharing; and in contributing to sustainable development.

#### **Responsible Travel**

Responsible Travel is about the attitude you take and the choices you make when travelling - to respect and benefit local people, their culture, economy and the environment.

Development Together placements include:

- Providing pre-departure briefing sessions that help you to learn as much as possible about the country you are going to, including: religion and culture, acceptable behaviors, dress standards, local rules and values,
- Providing language lessons on-arrival and the use of a local interpreter for small groups,
- Using public transport where possible,
- Staying in smaller-scale locally owned accommodation where possible,
- Buying locally produced food and drink, and purchasing souvenirs from local artisans,
- Spreading the economic benefits by patronising a range of suppliers,
- Minimising plastic waste where possible,
- Careful management of limited energy and water resources,
- Offering real life experiences which promote cross-cultural understanding,
- Avoiding the exploitation of the vulnerable - including women, children, animals and endangered species,
- Asking before taking photos or video of people,
- Be wary of giving gifts or money to beggars, children and people you have just met. Supporting the community through a local school, clinic or development project may be more constructive,
- After returning home think how you can support programs and organisations,
- Ensuring we have fair employment practices in place (using suppliers who have similar employment practices),
- Paying relevant taxes,
- Not engaging in any form of bribery, corruption or fraudulent activities.

#### **Environmental Responsibility**

To ensure We are consistently working towards protecting the environment and using resources in an efficient, fair and responsible way Development Together does the following:



- We aim to operate our business in a sustainable manner and address our environmental commitments under the United Nations Global Compact which in turn work toward the 7th Millennium Development Goal: Ensuring Environmental Sustainability,
- We design placements in a way that limits the physical impact on the destinations we visit, so that they may be enjoyed by many generations to come.

To minimise carbon emissions on Development Together placements, we make the following considerations:

- The placement industry is both impacted by climate change and it's also a sector that's a growing contributor to the problem. We see it as our responsibility to ensure that the negative impact we have on global warming is minimised and we work toward sustaining our environment. We encourage participants to carbon offset their flights,
- We try to use local public transport where possible, stay in locally owned and simpler styles of accommodation and eat at locally owned eateries where the food has been locally sourced, therefore reducing food mile emissions,
- We support initiatives that encourage conservative use of water and hot water such as low-flow shower roses,
- We endeavour to include and strongly encourage our participants to eat locally produced food and goods,
- We encourage our participants to refill a water bottle from water 'fountains' where available to avoid unnecessary purchasing of bottled water and the subsequent waste disposal issues,
- Economic empowerment of local communities through local purchasing can help improve education and health services, water supplies and sanitation and reduce dependence on non-sustainable livelihoods such as deforestation,
- We use local leaders and guides so that we learn about the culture and way of life directly from those who live it and put money into local hands and economies. We can particularly learn from indigenous rural communities about their relationship to the land and how they've practiced sustainable agriculture for centuries,
- Development Together leaders also provide participants with awareness on how they can practice principles of reduce, reuse, recycle and appropriate waste disposal at their destination.

Development Together adopts the following principles to manage our environmental footprint in all offices and stores around the world:

- We ensure automatic computer shut down at 8pm in our head office,
- We encourage Skype conferencing, rather than travelling for face-to-face meetings,
- We have reduced paper waste and waste to landfill by following a 'Reduce, reuse and recycle' guideline for our paper usage, all office paper and paper products are recycled where possible and we purchase sustainably sourced paper. Double-sided printing is the default setting on all printers.
- We have a composting system that composts all our fruit and vegetable scraps, tea bags and coffee grounds from our office space,
- Our staff are encouraged to use public transport, walk or ride to work.

### **Economic Responsibility**

**Our economic commitment** - To ensure our wealth is distributed in a way that's beneficial to our staff, host organisations and key stakeholders, while achieving responsible and sustainable growth of Development Together Travel and our associated companies.



## How are we doing this?

Our placements are designed to ensure that we support local communities by:

- Hiring local leaders and staff where Development Together operate, therefore contributing directly to local employment and ensuring competitive local remuneration,
- Using locally owned ground transportation and accommodation,
- Recommending local eateries and stores to our participants,
- Incorporating local public transport into our placements where possible,
- Development Together also embraces the United Nations Global Compact - a framework used to align a company's operations and strategies with universally accepted principles in the areas of human rights, labor, the environment and anti-corruption.

## Social Responsibility

We believe in supporting the local communities where our participants are placed. Some of the ways we do this are:

- We give back - Development Together pledges 20% of profits to be returned to one of our partners each year,
- Providing accommodation with local homestays/community stays - staying with a family or in a community may give you an interactive experience with local people. In addition, you bring your hosts direct income and your purchase of goods and services brings flow-on benefits to others in the community,
- Choosing to partner with Fair-Trade enterprises – choosing to spend your time and money at local or Fair-Trade restaurants and community enterprises will directly support community development,
- Most of our placement opportunities are with not-for-profit, development and non-governmental-organisations (NGOs) that are working on relevant sustainable projects,
- We develop meaningful partnerships with organisations and projects that care for their community and/or environment. We only work with organisations who can demonstrate:
  - Good governance over their projects (are legal, transparent and accountable)
  - Integrity to fulfil their mandate and measure and evaluate the impact of their programs
  - Do not participate in any activities that harm people, animals or the environment
  - Not forcing religious or political affiliations
  - Peaceful in their aims and objectives

### 1. Advocacy

Poverty, inequality, environmental degradation, exploitation of the vulnerable, poor health services, discrimination, climate change ...the list goes on of problems in the world that need addressing. A very important way you can help is by spreading your understanding of the issues and giving a voice on behalf of those who aren't adequately heard. Signing petitions, supporting or starting campaigns, attending or organising

rallies, writing letters, calling your local parliamentarian, choosing to purchase products and services from organisations with a strong social and environmental conscience - all these actions can make a real difference.

### 2. Protect



Observing basic human rights principles outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and ensuring we are promoting among our staff, customers, local communities and suppliers/business partners, their right to be treated with dignity, equality, freedom and respect.

Women & Minorities: We promote equality through:

- Support of enterprises run or staffed by women and/or minorities where available (such as local co-operatives, education initiatives)
- Seeking women and minorities to be represented in decision making that affects their local communities where possible
- Ensuring we are not partaking in any activities or using suppliers/services that discriminate against, exploit or traffic women and/or minority groups.

Children: We protect children (those 17 years of age and under) from all forms of abuse:

- We do not employ children nor do we use suppliers or patron places that allow children to perform work that is illegal or likely to jeopardise the child's health, safety or morals,
- We put in place strong measures to ensure that all Development Together companies, respective suppliers, passengers and partners are not involved in the exploitation of children, including training relevant employees/leaders on child protection and raising awareness among our participants on how to report incidents of child exploitation,
- Promoting credible initiatives that safeguard and assist in the positive development of children (eg. schools and child care initiatives),
- No superficial visits to children's shelters or orphanages are on our itineraries or on press/media trips.

Orphanage Tourism: We do not engage with orphanages and do not include visiting orphanages as part of our placements. Why have we done this?

- Children in orphanages are not always orphans – often they have been sold to an orphanage because their parents feel this will give them a better chance at life, or they are desperate for the money,
- We know that children do better in-home settings, either with their natural parents, extended family or family based alternatives,
- Many orphanage visitors do not speak the local languages, have no specific skill and stay for a short time – leading to a disrupted routine and instability,
- Tourism in orphanages is not well regulated, and visitors and volunteers go through very few checks beforehand, exposing already vulnerable kids to potential abuse,
- By visiting and volunteering at orphanages, travellers may actually be helping to commercialise orphanages and are perpetuating a model of care that separates kids from their families.

Animals: We oppose any exploitative or illegal practices and those that have a negative impact on animal welfare. At Development Together work toward promoting the five freedoms that should be available to all animals – wild or domestic;

- Freedom from pain, injury and disease,
- Freedom to express normal behaviour,
- Freedom from fear and distress.

### **Primary responsibility & Accountability**

This policy is governed by the Development Together Leadership Team and reviewed on an annual basis.

*\*Disclaimer: Reasonable precautions have been taken to ensure information in this publication is accurate. However, it is not intended to be legally comprehensive; it is designed to provide guidance in good faith, without accepting liability. If relevant, we therefore recommend you take appropriate professional advice before taking any action on the matters covered herein.*