



Why Corporate Social Responsibility Makes Sense For Tour Operators: Responding To Consumer Demand

Topline Results From Tearfund's Report *Worlds Apart* (released Jan 2002)

- One in 10 holidays taken by British people in 2001 were to the developing world – a total of 4.3 million holidays. But some of our favourite new destinations are also among the poorest countries on the globe. Places like India, Kenya, Nepal, Peru and Mexico, where millions struggle for survival on less than a pound a day¹. These countries rely heavily on tourism and it can bring many benefits. But too often it brings negative effects or the benefits simply bypass poor people.
- With a few notable exceptions², tourism has been one of the slowest industries to adopt corporate social responsibility practices. Tearfund research in 2001 revealed that, of 65 tour companies, only half had responsible tourism policies – and many of these were so brief as to be virtually meaningless³.
- In a Tearfund survey conducted in December 2001, more than half (52%) of those questioned would be more likely to book a holiday with a tour company that has a written code guaranteeing good working conditions, protection of the environment and support for local charities in tourist destinations.
- Nearly two out of three people (65%) surveyed said they wanted to know from travel agents and tour operators how to behave more responsibly when on holiday – by understanding local customs and politics, preserving the environment, supporting the economy and meeting local people.

Topline Results from ABTA-commissioned MORI research (October 2002)

- When choosing a holiday company:
 - The reputation of the holiday company on environmental issues is important to 65%.
 - The provision of social and environmental information in tour operator's brochure is important to 75%.
- 76% feel it is important to them that their holiday should benefit the people of the destination they are travelling to (for example through jobs and business opportunities).
- 87% say it is important to them that their holiday should not damage the environment.
- When asked for which things they would be willing to pay more money, if they were guaranteed as part of their holiday:
 - 49% would pay more if workers in the destination are guaranteed good wages and working conditions.
 - 47% would pay more if money goes towards preservation of the local environment and reversing some negative environmental effects of tourism.
 - 36% would pay more if hotels serve food produced locally.
 - 22% would pay more if money goes to support a local charity.

- When asked how much extra they would be willing to pay for the aforementioned guarantees:
 - 39% would pay an extra 5% (e.g. £25 on a holiday of £500).
 - 23% would pay an extra 2%.
 - 13% would pay an extra 1%.

- When asked how much extra they would be willing to pay, on top of the price of an air ticket, to cover environmental costs:
 - 30% would pay an extra 5%.
 - 21% would pay an extra 1%.
 - 20% would pay an extra 10%.

- 59% would be interested in finding out more about local issues (environmental and social) in their chosen resort, before they book a holiday.

- Ends -

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End Notes

¹ Pro-Poor Tourism Strategies: Making Tourism Work for the Poor, Ashely, Rowe, Goodwin, 2001

² Positive initiatives include the AITO Responsible Tourism Code, The Tour Operators Initiative for Sustainable Tourism Development and the launch of responsibletravel.com

³ Putting Ethics Into Practice, Tearfund, 2001