

RESPONSIBLE TOURISM POLICY

We use the definition of Responsible Tourism as **“Making better places to live in, and better places to visit”** - Harold Goodwin at the Cape Town Declaration on Responsible Tourism.

We hope that our responsible tourism policy inspires you to book one of our challenges and would like it to be more than a list of Dos and Don'ts.

Our hope is to help you connect to the local people and their culture as much as possible; and to make the difference between having a great challenge and a life changing experience. We work closely with our ground handlers to achieve this hope.

Through our policy, we acknowledge that it is our responsibility to ensure that we do all we can to contribute to making better places for people to live in the countries that we operate, and better places for you to visit.

Below we have outlined our aims and examples of how we have already achieved them in some of the countries in which we operate.

CHARITY CHALLENGE AIMS TO:

1. Use locally owned services whenever possible.
2. Encourage transparency with our ground teams about how responsibly they manage our tours.
3. Support projects in the countries in which we operate.
4. Move towards using local leaders on all overseas challenges rather than foreign leaders.

1. USE LOCAL SERVICES WHEN POSSIBLE

Better Places For People To Visit

By using local services, we believe that your experience on the challenge will be more authentic. You will gain a greater insight into the country's traditions, culture and leave with a better understanding of the country you've just visited. For example, eating in local restaurants will give you a culinary experience and a taste for the true cooking styles and hospitality of the local area.

Better Places For People To Live

The use of local services means you are contributing directly to local economy and providing employment. This income will go directly to local people rather than to an internationally owned hotel chain.

However as safety is our priority this may mean on occasion if our standards are at risk of being compromised we will use an alternative supplier.

Example

In Tanzania on our Kilimanjaro treks the ground agents we use are locally owned and we have worked with them since we first started running our challenges almost 2 decades ago. We stay in locally owned accommodation, eat in locally owned restaurants and source food locally.

In the UK, nearly all of the accommodation provided for our challenges is with either the Youth Hostel association (a UK registered charity, which supports people accessing the outdoors) or independent and locally own hostels.

2. ENCOURAGE TRANSPARENCY WITH OUR GROUND HANDLERS ON HOW RESPONSIBLY THEY MANAGE THEIR TOURS/YOUR CHALLENGES.

Better places for people to visit

A destinations culture can impact on how responsibly a tour can be run. As such we are encouraging greater transparency between ourselves and our ground handlers in order to gain a better understanding of how to work with and support them to make a trip more sustainable bearing in mind any local constraints. We are then able to share this knowledge with you and share best practice.

Better places for people to live

When we hear of a good initiative in the one of the countries in which we operate and if we are in a position to provide greater support to help it grow we endeavour to do so. We try to ensure the sustainability of the initiative by working as always with the local teams.

Example

Recycling of plastic in Nepal is not yet common place with plastic being buried in the ground. The ground team used to provide all clients with bottled water each day. To reduce the use of plastic, we have asked you as participants to bring reusable bottles and asked our ground handlers to ensure purified water is provided for drinking. This has reduced the use of plastic on our Everest Base Camp trek hugely and we estimate that since 2014 we have used 2000 less plastic bottles.

3. SUPPORT PROJECTS IN THE COUNTRIES THAT WE OPERATE; EMPOWER LOCAL PEOPLE; DEVELOP SKILLS; AND ENHANCE YOUR CHALLENGE EXPERIENCE.

Better places for people to visit

We operate in dozens of countries and endeavour to provide assistance to communities that we visit where it is needed and practical. We do this in conjunction with our local partners. Local initiatives and projects are reviewed and if appropriate they are included in the itineraries and become part of your challenge experience. Charity Challenge has currently invested approximately £200,000 into local community projects over the years.

Better places for people to live

We support projects that empower people to learn and develop new skills. These projects frequently produce crafts or skills in the service industry.

Examples

The fantastic Friend's International restaurant in Phnom Penh, Cambodia trains local youth and develops their skills leading to greater social inclusion. On our Saigon to Angkor Wat cycle, you will have the opportunity to have dinner at this restaurant as part of your cycle itinerary. You can find more information about this project [here](#).

The Pamoja Tunaweza project in Tanzania seeks to empower vulnerable and at risk youth. They learn a craft and create beautiful handmade bracelets with the Kilimanjaro summit coordinates engraved on it. This social enterprise gives them the opportunity to become responsible members of the community. As part of trek itinerary you may have the chance to stop and visit this great project; learn how it works; and support the project by purchasing some handmade crafts if you wish. If you want to find more information about this project please click [here](#).

4. A MOVE TOWARDS USING ONLY LOCAL LEADERS

Better places for people to visit

A local challenge leader will have the best knowledge of their country; the culture and traditions which a UK or foreign leader would not. A local leader on a challenge allows you to feel part of the community in which your challenge takes place; and to make real connections and friendships with people in unique parts of the world. We feel that it will provide you with a more personal experience, whilst providing income, training and future opportunities for the individual leaders.

Better places for people to live

Using local leaders provides increased employment and income and a sense of empowerment. We aim to roll out training to local leaders so they have greater opportunities to work both with Charity Challenge and with other groups who visit their country. Increasing the skill sets of local leaders improves local standards and creates a long term and sustainable way of local people improving living standards.

Example

In 2014 our Operations Manager, Andy Baker, along with a locally based UK Mountain Leader, conducted training for 30 local guides who work on Kilimanjaro. They ran an assessment of the leaders whilst working with actual groups on the mountain and followed this up with additional training. A post training assessment identified additional training needs which were followed up. In 2015 a UK Doctor worked with these guides to build upon their first aid skills. Subsequently Charity Challenge made the switch to use specifically authorised and approved local leaders on Kilimanjaro, working alongside a UK expedition doctor. The feedback since this switch has been overwhelmingly positive.

A good leader makes you feel safe and understands your needs. A great leader can make you feel part of the local community and can inspire you with local stories and a fuller understanding of the environment that your challenge takes place in. We want to ensure that you have the best experience on your challenge and as such are moving towards using local leaders on all our overseas challenges where safety and customer service will not be compromised.