

# Leave the World a Better Place.®



Changes in public attitudes are essential for changing business practices. The public has responsibility for responsible business behavior, and vice versa. The fact that we're all empowered to change the world for the better is cause for hope. We are seeing major shifts in public and business attitudes toward a more sustainable future - In the last year alone, addressing global warming went from being an obscure grassroots initiative to becoming a mainstream phenomenon. Conscientious consumers and travellers are increasingly looking for eco-friendly products and services. At STI, we feel the momentum on a daily basis. The number of inquiries we receive about sustainable tourism, and the sales of carbon offsets we sell continues to exceed our expectations.

In summary, we're decidedly optimistic about the future and want to take this opportunity to thank you – the responsible traveler – for making the world a better place.

**Brian Mullis, President**

*Sustainable Travel International*

# Our holiday, their homes!

Often when we are preparing for a holiday we give little thought to the impact we will have on the destination, its people, culture, economy and environment. Below are a number of ways, as a traveler, you can ensure that communities, other travelers and the destination as a whole benefits from your visit.

**Want to learn how to create an instant smile?** Think about the barriers you can eliminate by making connections with local people. Chat with the locals and try to speak their language! You are sure to get an instant smile and a laugh to seal those memories.

**It's not a classroom examination,** but if you read up on the communities and the places you intend to visit, your experience will be A+. But remember that your guidebook is just that - a guide. It is not a travel bible and it doesn't know everything. If you want to truly experience a place, go off-the-beaten-path and explore. You will be glad you did!

We often forget that **our holidays are spent in other people's homes.** It is easy to forget that our hurried concept of time is not the same in other cultures and local people's thought patterns differ from your own. Challenge yourself and do like the locals do, just for one day – you won't want to miss such a unique experience.

**What's on the menu tonight?** Bargaining is expected in many cultures, and we all enjoy the fun of haggling with a smile and a laugh. Sometimes it is easy to get carried away when trying to find the best possible deal. Maybe you will save yourself some money, but what you save could be enough to pay for an entire family's meal that night!

**Are you too big for your boots?** How heavily do you 'tread' on your holiday? Natural resources are precious in every country, and the size of your ecological footprint while on holiday will have an impact on the future of the destination.

**Make a difference to the destination** by reusing the same water bottle, not buying wildlife products, turning off lights and air conditioners when not in the room, and thinking about your waste disposal.

**Go ape over local bananas** – or any type of local produce for that matter! By buying from local markets and at roadside vendors and stands you will help to keep money in the local economy, as well as keeping local people in a job and supporting their family.

**Make positive contributions to the destinations and communities you visit.** The offer of one school pen is often felt by many travelers as a constructive way to help. Giving gifts to children and adults unfortunately encourages begging. Look around the destination and find a project, health centre or school to donate to, or alternatively volunteer your time. Your contribution will have a more positive and long-lasting impact than 'one school pen'.

