



**PRESENTS**

# **Introduction to Sustainable Tourism**

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# A message from our founder, Vicky Smith.

*Having worked in tourism in the mass market from the mid 1990s, in destinations and head offices, I've witnessed the negative impacts that most tourism has. So I wanted to find a better way: how and where tourism could, and would, help benefit the world we live in, and really connect with it, not just take from it.*

*And so Earth Changers was founded in 2017, coincidentally the UN Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development, for which I was thrilled Earth Changers was authorised as a solution by the UN World Tourism Organisation.*

*This ebook gives an insight - we hope you find it interesting, informative and useful.*

*As a small business offering a lot of advice for free, we'd love it if you can support us by liking, sharing and subscribing to our updates.*

*And if you're wanting a truly sustainable trip, unsure where to go, be sure to let us know so we can help advise you.*

*Be the change with us,  
Vicky*



To read more of Vicky's story visit

<https://www.earth-changers.com/sustainable-development/vicky-smith-founder>

# Who are we?

Earth Changers is a curated collection of some of the best positive impact sustainable tourism from around the world.

We feature 'Life-Changing Places with World-Changing People for Extraordinary Experiences with Purpose'.

Travel to any of our partner destinations, & you can be an Earth Changer too.



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**LIFE IS TOO SHORT TO NOT EXPLORE.**  
PIONEER. FOLLOW YOUR HEART AND ADVENTURE WITH PASSION.  
EXPERIENCE THE WORLD, ITS EXTRAORDINARY PEOPLE & AWE-INSPIRING PLACES.  
TRAVEL WITH PURPOSE, TO GIVE BACK AND HAVE A TRUE POSITIVE IMPACT.

BEHAVE WITH **TAKE RESPONSIBILITY**  
**INTEGRITY.** FOR YOUR CHOICES.

**TRANSFORM. NOTHING WORTH DOING IS EASY,**  
**RESISTANCE REQUIRES PERSISTENCE.**

LEARN, LIFE LONG, FROM CULTURAL DIFFERENCES,  
ENLIGHTENED BY COMMUNITIES, ENGAGING IN COLLABORATION.

EMBRACE DIVERSITY, RESPECTING RIGHTS AND HERITAGE.

BE HUMAN-KIND. ALL PEOPLE ARE EQUAL, EVERYONE HAS THEIR STORY.

**SHARE YOUR JOURNEY, SPIRITED,**  
**ENTERPRISING AND LIFE-CHANGING.**

EMPATHY BRINGS CONNECTION, A SENSE OF BELONGING AND WELL-BEING.

**WE ARE [NOT SEPARATE FROM] OUR ENVIRONMENT,**  
THE WORLD'S NATURE IS INTERCONNECTED AND PRECIOUS.

**MOTHER EARTH ROAMS FREE WITHIN AND WITHOUT US.**

**LOVE AND CHERISH TO THRIVE AND FLOURISH.**

QUALITY OVER QUANTITY      TOUGH TRUTHS FOR REALITY.

**AIM FOR PROSPERITY - OF MINDS, BODIES & SOULS.**

TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS, YOUR SENSE OF PLACE AND BALANCE.

SWITCH OFF, RECHARGE. RECOGNISE  
THE POWER OF RETREAT,  
RECONNECTING & REVITALISING.

LOVE OUR  
WONDERFUL

**ASPIRE TO INSPIRE, STRIVE TO SUSTAIN. WORLD**

# Our Values

Values are the deeply held principles that are important to us, forming a foundation to help guide our decision-making, choices, behaviour, reactions and emotions.

They are the core of who we are, our motivators, drivers, passions and raison d'etre - our reason for being, our existence.

Earth Changers' values are:



**Adventure** - travel and adventure but also a curious mind for cultural exchange and life-long learning.



**Connection** - we are connected in the people we meet, the places we go and the purpose we serve. Our sphere extends to our environment and our relationships within it.



**Integrity** - we maintain our sustainability principles in our business practice. We are transparent, honest, upfront and open.

Our logo also represents our values. To find out how visit

<https://www.earth-changers.com/blog/2016/10/29/the-earth-changers-logo>

To learn more about us check out: <https://www.earth-changers.com/earth-changers>

# Introduction

Sustainable tourism is defined by the UN World Tourism Organisation as 'Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities'.

Contrary to common belief, it is not a type of tourism or place. Rather it is an ethos by which an organisation runs its operation.



The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) is the specialized agency responsible for the promotion of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism.

2017 was designated The International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development (#IY2017) by the United Nations.

Find out more about about the UNWTO and the year of sustainable tourism by visiting [www.earth-changers.com/blog/2017/1/18/what-are-the-sustainable-development-goals-and-what-have-they-got-to-do-with-tourism](http://www.earth-changers.com/blog/2017/1/18/what-are-the-sustainable-development-goals-and-what-have-they-got-to-do-with-tourism)

# Responsible Tourism

Responsible Tourism means “making better places for people to live in and better places for people to visit” (Cape Town Declaration, 2002) – with the host destination first priority, not the visitor.

Responsible tourism means taking responsibility for tourism, and the choices and impacts made in developing it. It requires tourism stakeholders such as operators, hoteliers, governments, local people and tourists to take responsibility, and take action to make tourism more sustainable.

Responsible tourism aims to minimize tourism's negative impacts and maximize its positive contributions to local people and places.



Read more at:

<https://www.earth-changers.com/blog/2017/1/17/sustainable-tourism-ecotourism-responsible-travel-conscious-tourism-whats-the-difference>



# What is the difference?

Sustainable tourism and responsible tourism have the same 'triple bottom line' pillars:

- Environmental integrity
- Social justice
- Local economic benefits

In responsible tourism, all stakeholders are asked to take responsibility for their actions and their impacts.

Sustainability is the ultimate destination to aim for, while responsibility is the journey to reach it.



Read more about different variations of sustainability in tourism:

<https://www.earth-changers.com/blog/2017/1/17/sustainable-tourism-ecotourism-responsible-travel-conscious-tourism-whats-the-difference>

# Triple Bottom Line

Conventionally a business strives to maximise its profit, also known as the 'bottom line'.

Sustainable tourism businesses strive to observe sustainability impacts.

They consider not only the economic benefits but also the environmental and social impacts: This is the 'triple bottom line'.

## **Our Partner's Story** **Destination - Kenya**

Live an ancestral experience with the backdrop of Kilimanjaro where the wildest nature meets the Maasai warriors' culture, all the while protecting what you are enjoying.

The founder Luca Belpietro, with collaboration with the Maasai community designed a lodge that maintains the lifestyle of the Maasai and the ecosystem that supports all.



Read more about Luca setting up the Maasai community lodge: <https://www.earth-changers.com/sustainable-development/luca-belpietro-kenya-cyk-mwct>

Learn more about triple bottom line: <https://www.earth-changers.com/blog/iy2017-international-year-of-sustainable-tourism-for-development>

# Economic Impacts

One of the three sustainability pillars is Economy.

The travel industry today makes positive impacts in economic growth and job creation: supporting 1.5 billion global consumers and 10% of global economy and jobs.

However it has caused unequal gains. Such negative impacts include host countries not benefiting from tourists because non-host companies represent economic 'leakage' outside the country.

## Our Partner's Story Destination - Galapagos

For example in Galapagos, local communities often don't receive any economic benefit from the cruises coming to the islands.

Tourists do not stay there nor spend money at local shops. A majority of profit may go to a cruise company which is based abroad. With sustainable tourism, companies have to consider the economic benefit for the local community.



For example, employ local staff, buy local produce and collaborate with local businesses.

In Floreana, Galapagos, Jascivan Carvalho developed the first community-based tourism on the island after his experience with Amazon tribe community tourism.

Read more about Jascivan's story: <https://www.earth-changers.com/sustainable-development/jascivan-carvalho-tropic-ecuador>

Learn more about community-based travel: <https://www.earth-changers.com/blog/2019/12/9/the-future-of-community-tourism-top-10-tips-for-ethical-volunteering-community-travel>

# Environmental Impacts

Environmental impact is an important factor for sustainable tourism. Conventional tourism has caused major environmental degradation. Impacts include waste, loss of habitat, wildlife and pollution.

Sustainable tourism organisations have to consider the environment in their decision-making. They can benefit the environment by supporting environmental conservation, educational programs, proper waste management and reducing carbon footprints.

## **Our Partner's Story** **Destination - Tanzania**

Sibylle Riedmiller developed an ecolodge on an island in Tanzania as the first private marine park in the world: A tireless commitment to conserving Tanzania's marine environment and natural resources for which she has been awarded the Order of Merit Cross from the Federal Republic of Germany.

*"We had to make people understand that coral reefs have a value without taking them out."*



*"That a manta is one meal for a few people only, but it's income for many, over many years, if it's used for ecotourism and if benefits are shared. But those people who would otherwise eat the manta have to benefit from it living."*

Read more about Sibylle's story: <https://www.earth-changers.com/sustainable-development/sibylle-riedmiller-chumbe-island>

Experience the marine protected area she created:  
<https://www.earth-changers.com/sustainable-places/tanzania-chumbe-island>

# Social Impacts

The travel industry has critical effects on society and repercussions on social welfare.

For instance, destinations with over-tourism have seen locals being pushed out of tourist areas due to rising prices. Other problems include the overcrowding, a loss of culture, and health challenges.

Sustainable tourism increases the social benefit by educating the tourist, initiating infrastructure and supporting social services to contribute to community well-being.

## **Our Partner's Story** **Destination - Malawi**

Gain incredible insight into key global issues facing rural communities in Africa through immersive learning opportunities and challenge events.

Guests can visit social enterprises related to sustainable development goals and in turn contribute to social enterprises for development, such as a beautiful fair trade tea plantation.



Dom and Kate Webb started this organisation in Malawi to connect tourism and support sustainable development through social enterprise and cross-cultural exchange.

Read more about Dom and Kate's story creating social enterprise tourism in Malawi:  
<https://www.earth-changers.com/sustainable-development/dom-kate-webb-malawi>

Experience tourism for sustainable development in Malawi for yourself:  
<https://www.earth-changers.com/sustainable-places/malawi-responsible-safari-company>

# Other Forms of Sustainable Tourism

Ecotourism is 'responsible travel to natural areas that: conserves the environment; socially and economically sustains the well-being of the local people; and creates knowledge and understanding through interpretation and education of all involved (including staff, travelers, and community residents)' (Global Ecotourism Network, 2015)

Conscious travel is a form of tourism that strives to 'create an environmentally sustainable, socially just and spiritually fulfilling travel economy that does not cost the earth.'

Ethical travel is similar to conscious tourism but more focused on mindfulness of our travel choices based on moral values.

Community-based tourism is described as 'tourism owned and/or managed by communities and intended to deliver wider community benefit'.

There are many more forms on tourism such as Slow tourism, Geo-tourism and Pro-poor tourism.

Read more about different variations of sustainability in tourism:  
<https://www.earth-changers.com/blog/2017/1/17/sustainable-tourism-ecotourism-responsible-travel-conscious-tourism-whats-the-difference>

# Volunteer Tourism

'Voluntourism' is the blend of volunteering and tourism. It's a working holiday for social and/or environmental causes, whilst experiencing deeper integration with community, culture and conservation, with expenses covered by the volunteer.

Some voluntourism has become corrupt with middle men taking advantage of locals' misfortune and the volunteer's desire to make a difference. At Earth Changers we're specialists to discern the difference.

## Our Partner's Story

### Destination - Madagascar

As a volunteer, support community development and conservation projects to tackle extreme poverty and preserve one of the planet's most unique and endangered environments.

This project started with Mark Jacobs who wanted to work with the community in Madagascar to support impactful projects.



Read more about Mark's journey: <https://www.earth-changers.com/sustainable-development/mark-jacobs-seed-madagascar>

Learn more about how to choose ethical voluntourism: <https://www.earth-changers.com/blog/2019/12/5/volunteering-7-tips-on-how-to-choose-ethical-amp-responsible-volunteer-tourism>

Experience Madagascar volunteering for yourself:  
<https://www.earth-changers.com/sustainable-places/madagascar>

# Greenwashing

Greenwashing happens when a company uses misleading or inflated claims to enhance their products' and services' 'green' sustainability credentials.

This makes the consumer believe that they are making more of a positive difference than they are, from which the company profits.

This may be through intention or ignorance.

So how do we identify greenwashing in tourism? One of the ways is through certification and accreditation.

In order to substantiate green claims, some organisations follow a process to verify and certify that their tourism products (eg. accommodation, tours, venues or attractions) meet predetermined sustainability standards. Third party organisations may check see if they meet the standards and give advice on improvement.



However on the downside, certification schemes are purely voluntary, can cost significant amounts of money, time and resource to pursue, and differ in their standards of integrity.

This is why Earth Changers exist: to ensure your travels create genuine impact to sustainability projects with our curated destination partners.

Learn more about identifying greenwashing and its impact:

<https://www.earth-changers.com/blog/2018/9/25/greenwashing-in-sustainable-tourism-amp-responsible-travel>



# How can Tourism be Sustainable if you Fly?

There is no getting away from the fact tourism is both affected fundamentally by climate change and is a significant contributor to the global emissions of greenhouse gases.

Leisure aviation emissions represent 2.5-3.5% total global emissions, roughly 5% if considering effects at altitude - but it's vital to continue supporting communities and conservation.

However, global emissions from the aviation industry could come to represent as high as 27% by 2050: travel needs to minimise its negative impacts.



Read more on travel in this era of climate (and nature) breakdown: <https://www.earth-changers.com/blog/2019/5/8/travel-in-the-era-of-nature-and-climate-breakdown>

We're a signatory to support the sector with Tourism Declares Climate Emergency.  
Learn more: <https://www.earth-changers.com/about/tourism-declares>

# Reducing Carbon Footprints

It is possible to reduce your carbon footprint by consciously choosing lower carbon options.

Sometimes, we have no choice but to fly to travel to sustainable destinations, but tourism's positive impacts are vital once there.

Travellers can choose to lower their carbon footprint such as flying less, flying shorter distances or even select short haul flights.

The accommodation and also tour and activities you choose also make a difference.



Read tips and more about carbon emissions, offsets and your footprints: <https://www.earth-changers.com/blog/2018/5/15/10-tips-on-how-to-reduce-your-carbon-footprint-in-travel-and-should-you-carbon-offset>

# Diversity

Travelling, especially internationally, means meeting people of different cultures, norms or lifestyles.

Diversity is defined as 'variety', something that is different from each other. People are the same and different. Human diversity includes: country of origin, family and ethnic background, race, sex, age, culture, professional background and training, religious or political beliefs and personality.

Each person we meet is like an iceberg, where most of the person's aspects are not obvious to observe. Being aware of the less obvious parts of them such as their beliefs or concept of time, is critical to not making wrong assumptions.

The UNWTO's global code of ethics for people and planet includes:

- Tolerance and respect for ethical values common to humanity.
- Harmony with hosts' attributes and traditions, laws and customs.
- Respect for tourist visitors
- Security and protection for tourists, tourism facilities and cultural or natural heritage.



- Conduct by tourists respectful to local laws, people and environment.
- Tourists behaving to minimise risks to safety including learning about destination culture and communities.

One of the sustainable development goals (SDG) is Equality for All.

Read more on this goal in our free ebook on Travel and the Sustainable Development Goals:

<https://www.earth-changers.com/travel-and-the-sdgs-ebook>

# Tourism and COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic halted our lives and travel. Never before have 100% destinations worldwide had simultaneous travel restrictions.

With lockdown and less movement, it offered a chance to reconnect with the community, appreciate our environment and create a new norm.

However, it also cut off and cut support for destinations from tourism including all the SDG impacts, key to sustainable development especially for vulnerable people and places.

What could this mean for tourism in the longer term?  
How can you support tourism for sustainable development?



Learn about what Covid-19 means for travel:

<https://www.earth-changers.com/blog/2020/8/13/top-tips-for-responsible-travel-in-the-covid-era-what-can-we-expect-in-the-new-normal>

Read more about what Covid-19 could mean for a 'new normal' in tourism:

<https://www.earth-changers.com/blog/2020/4/18/travel-after-coronavirus-covid-19-lockdown-finding-the-new-responsible-normal>

# Be the change

Join us and be an Earth Changer too! Follow the happenings in sustainable tourism and be the change in travel and tourism you wish to see:

- Subscribe to our newsletter at:

✉ [www.earth-changers.com](http://www.earth-changers.com)

- Follow us on social media:

 [@earth\\_changers\\_](https://twitter.com/earth_changers_)

 [/earthchangers.travel](https://www.facebook.com/earthchangers.travel)

 [@earthchangers](https://www.pinterest.com/earthchangers)

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- Contact us for speaking, consultancy and partnerships: <https://www.earth-changers.com/contact>

