



# Role of Communications in Sustainable Tourism: TIES Perspective

Presented by:

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Evaluation of E-Conference Session III:  
“Communication for Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSR)”  
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**The International  
Ecotourism  
Society**

*Uniting Conservation, Communities  
and Sustainable Travel*

# What is TIES?

- Founded in 1990.
- Largest and oldest ecotourism organization in the world.
- Offices: Washington, DC; Costa Rica; Australia
- Members in about 100 countries

[www.ecotourism.org](http://www.ecotourism.org)



# What is Ecotourism?

“Responsible travel to natural areas which conserves the environment and improves the welfare of local people.”

--The International Ecotourism Society, 1990

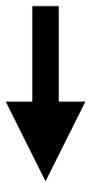
**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:** “Meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs.”

--The Bruntland Commission, 1987

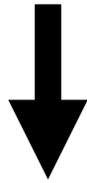


# 3 Legs of Ecotourism

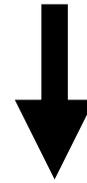
**Conservation**



**Communities**



**Education**



# Ecotourism is to Mass Tourism...



...what Hybrids are to Hummers



# TIES' CSR Initiatives: Communication Tools

- Consumer Demand
- Travel Choice campaign
- 'Green' Certification
- Travelers Philanthropy

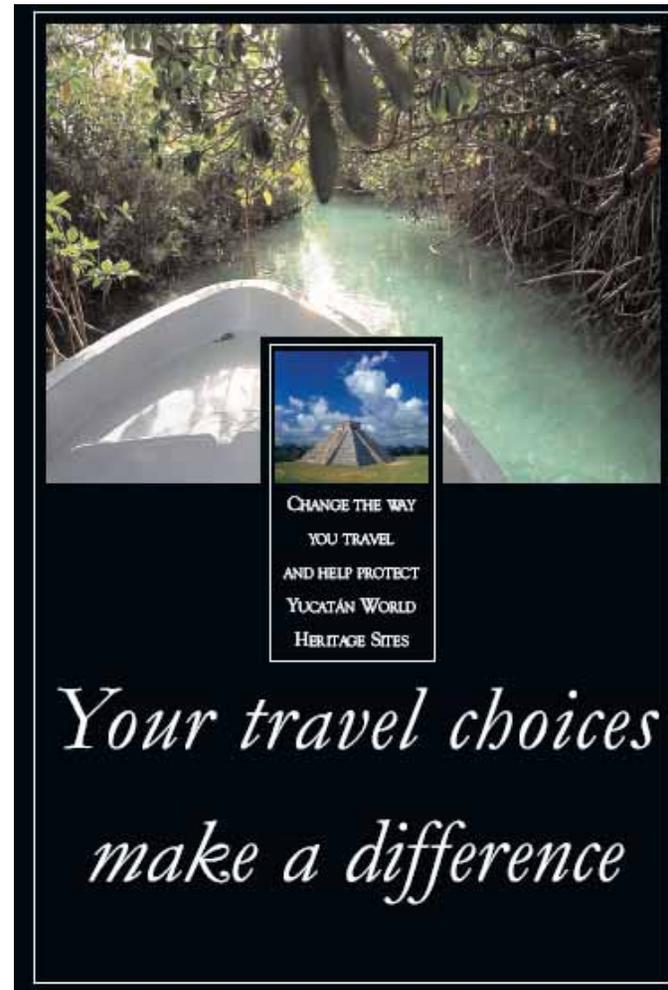


# Consumer Demand

- **Tourists:**  $\frac{3}{4}$  say their travel should not damage environment.
- **Tourists:** majority say they want to learn about customs, geography, culture.
- **Tourists:** At least  $\frac{1}{3}$  say they are willing to *pay more* to companies that benefit local communities and conservation.
- **Tour operators:** superior environmental performance brings branding and price advantages.



# TIES' Consumer Education



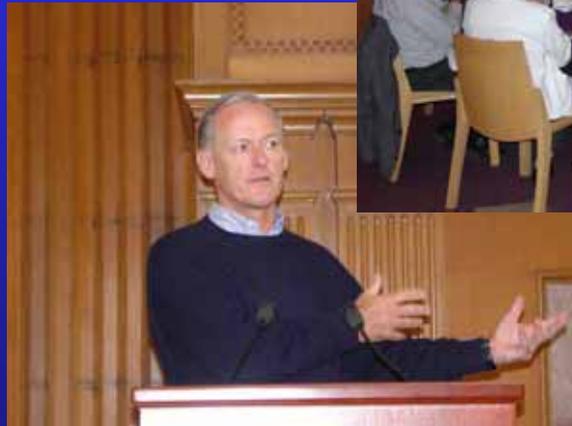
# Travelers' Philanthropy: A Tool for CSR

- ❖ Growing corporate social responsibility within the tourism industry
- ❖ Civic-minded travelers and travel businesses giving “time, talent & treasure”
- ❖ New source of development aid to host communities
- ❖ Grown exponentially, with many millions flowing into community projects
- ❖ Coalescing into more organized “movement”
- ❖ Website: [www.travelersphilanthropy.org](http://www.travelersphilanthropy.org)



# Giving Structure to Growing Social Movement...

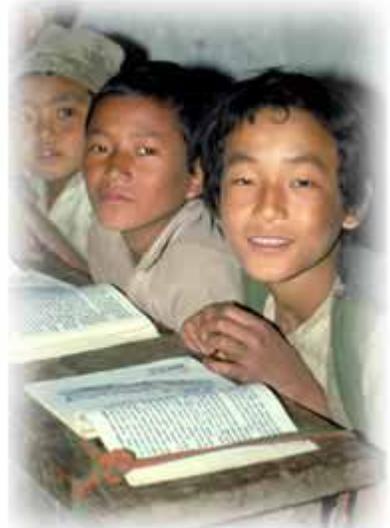
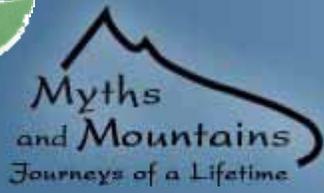
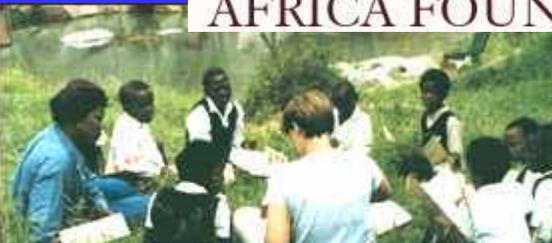
- ❖ April 2004: Stanford University hosted major conference



- ❖ .... 80 participants from around the world



# Wide Range of Companies Involved

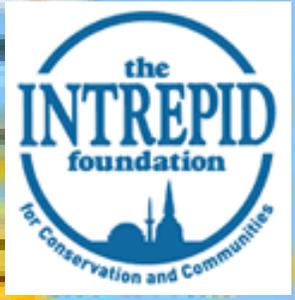
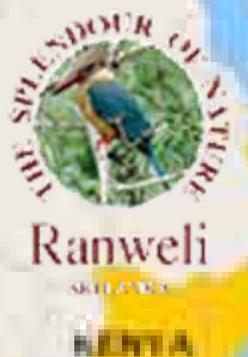


Sarapiquí Conservation Learning Center



READ NEPAL

Building Literacy and Community Through Libraries



Ecotourism Society of Sri Lanka (ESSL)



ශ්‍රී ලංකා ජාතික සංචාරක පදනම  
Sri Lanka Ecotourism Foundation  
the pioneer ecotourism organization of sri lanka

# Intrepid Travel's Community Projects

## Tibet:

### Braille Without Borders

Education for blind children



## East Timor:

### The Alola Foundation

Promoting the interests of women and their families



## Thailand:

### Friends of the Asian Elephant

Protecting and caring for the welfare of wild and domesticated elephants





### express newsletter

subscribe here ▼

subscribe

### trip finder

quick search ▼

search

--continent-- ▼

--country-- ▼

--trip (optional)-- ▼

search

search & browse ►

## responsible travel

Intrepid is committed to a style of travel that is environmentally, culturally and socially responsible - we call this 'Responsible Travel'. With your participation we aim to travel in a way that conserves the areas we visit and bring positive benefits to local communities.

### our travel style

- ▶ Grass roots travel using local public transport where possible - minimises demand for special tourist vehicles and fuel.
- ▶ We choose small-scale locally owned accommodation and homestays where available and local restaurants and markets for dining, retaining revenue in local communities.
- ▶ Our group leaders facilitate communication of our values to travellers and local communities, educating them in sustainable tourism practices.
- ▶ We employ local guides to aid travellers' understanding of local culture and etiquette.
- ▶ Small groups allow travellers to experience cultures at first hand, offering greater opportunity for cross-cultural understanding.
- ▶ We are committed to putting back into the communities and regions we visit by supporting many aid, development and conservation projects in these areas. Much of this support is through [The Intrepid Foundation](#) and travellers are invited to contribute.



### for more information...

[responsible travel guidelines for travellers](#)

[responsible travel code of conduct](#)

[research page](#)

[partners/links](#)

### the 'RT' team

My job is to monitor our current practices and develop sustainable tourism programmes so that we can all enjoy our travel destinations for many years to come. Our group leaders play an important role, implementing our philosophy and coordinating projects in the field.



# Why are Companies Involved?

- ❖ Vanguard are ecotourism companies with strong social & environmental ethic
- ❖ Rising needs in poor countries ~ shrinking government budgets & donor aid
- ❖ “Insurance policy” ~ easier to do business in host community
- ❖ Increases staff pride and commitment
- ❖ Offers marketing differentiation





And....

Travelers enrich their own trips when they seek to contribute to the well-being of the places that they visit.



# Strong Consumer Support for Travelers' Philanthropy

- ❖ In U.S., individuals represent largest single source (76%) of philanthropic dollars
- ❖ 70% of upscale US travelers would pay \$150 more for hotel with “responsible environmental attitude”
- ❖ 31% of American tourists believe companies should employ local residents & support local community
- ❖ 46 million US travelers chose companies that “donate part of their proceeds to charities”



# Travelers Philanthropy = Hot Press Topic



When planning a vacation, you can benefit a good cause.

**PHILANTHROPY**  
 When you travel, you can help a good cause.

At top, wreaths and hundreds of other Christmas decorations and gifts are sold at Colonial Williamsburg, where purchases support educational programs. Squaw Valley, Calif., is the site of a game on skis that benefits multiple sclerosis. Below, Murals adorn the National Cowgirl Museum of Fame in Fort Worth. Sales of gifts in the shop help support the museum.

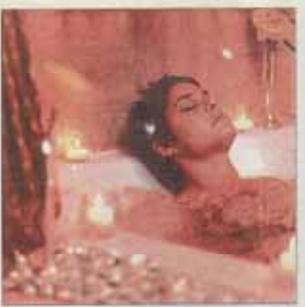
## Truly Beneficial Vacations

At top, wreaths and hundreds of other Christmas decorations and gifts are sold at Colonial Williamsburg, where purchases support educational programs. Squaw Valley, Calif., is the site of a game on skis that benefits multiple sclerosis. Below, Murals adorn the National Cowgirl Museum of Fame in Fort Worth. Sales of gifts in the shop help support the museum.

...directed to philanthropy of millions of dollars," she points out, are turning to charity to help. To warm feelings, check the beneficiary actually offers a service or a service for tax-exempt contributions and services available compassionate communities and U.S. resort and the American Friends of the Epilepsy Fund. Stop Cancer, which education, which encourages begins at home at some educational purposes or to



**Spa treatments at Hotel Hershey in Pennsylvania and proceeds from all divisions of Hershey Entertainment benefit a school for children from low-income families.**  
 HERSCHEY ENTERTAINMENT



visit and, of course, is hard. Each team receives a minimum of \$1,000 to be given to the non-profit organization. A medalist in men's 1964 Olympic winter agonized with multiple sclerosis. To plan a winter or outside with a charity with your favorite Bachelor Resort in a trailer a five-day of 28 for a donation of food to the local food bank. Calif., a Breast Cancer on March 13 will meet cancer events is a festival of films out women during the Week in Breckenridge. 15-22, proceeds of Cancer Fund. at Bull Springs Constitutional in Canada, will support Robert's Waterkeeper Alliance organization. th America, thou-

## Holiday gifts and travel with heart

# US State Department Corporate Excellence Award 2005



# 'Green' Certification: Tool for CSR

- *Procedure that assesses, audits and gives written assurance that a facility, product, process or service meets specific standards. It awards a marketable logo to those that meet or exceed baseline standards.*



# Tourism Certification: Quality & Service





# Examples of Certification Programs in Europe



*Das Österreichische Umweltzeichen für Tourismusbetriebe*

25



*Ecolabel Luxemburg*

>100



*Den Groenne Noegle*

250



*Legambiente Turismo*

13



*Ö+ Steinbock*

70



*Cataluna Ecolabel*



*Green Tourism Business Scheme*

450



*Milieubarometer*

220



*Nordic Swan*

60



*La Clef Verte*

70



*Green Certificate Latvia*

53

>1.500

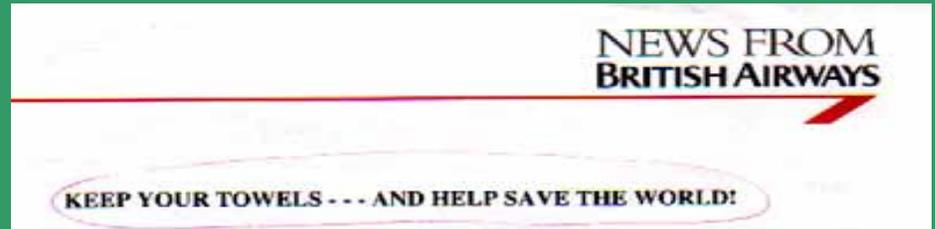


*Blue Flag International*

2093 & 729

# Why certify?

❖ Greenwashing

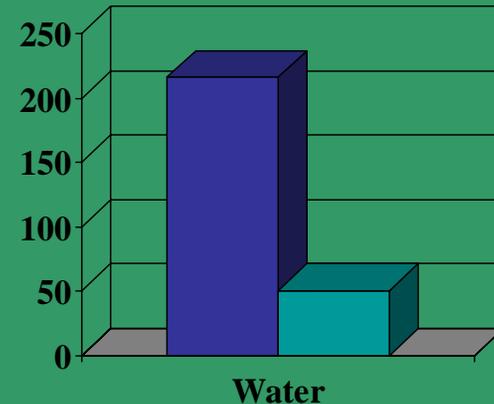


❖ Raise industry standards



❖ Staff education

❖ Cost savings



❖ Marketing advantage



*Is there one?*



*How can we create one?*

# Consumer Demand for Certification

- ❖ **Germany:** Environmental quality is “very high on the list of holiday essentials.” (TUI)
- ❖ **Italy:** 94% of tourists support environmental protection measures for hotels; 90% favor single ecolabel.
- ❖ **US:** 80% of tourists say preserving environment is important, *but only* 14% ask if hotel has environmental policy. (Small Luxury Hotels)

# Costa Rica: Certification for Sustainable Tourism



# Criteria for Hotels:

4 areas, 153 questions

- **Biological & physical surroundings**
  - Emissions and wastes
  - Gardens; natural areas (reserve)
- **Hotel facilities**
  - Waste & energy consumption
  - Staff training
- **Customer**
  - Management of groups (guides)
  - Customer feedback
- **Socio-economic context**
  - Direct/indirect economic benefits to community





Rara Avis



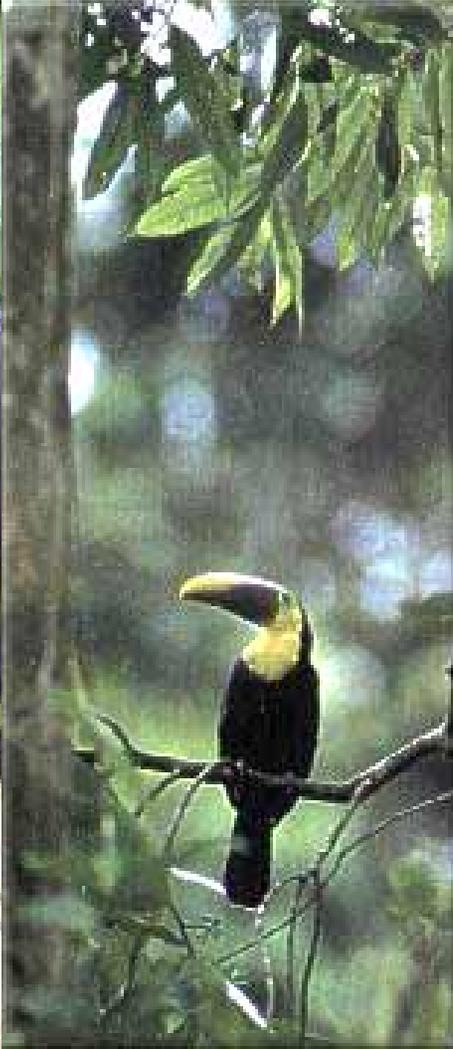
*Finca Rosa Blanca Country Inn*



*an Explosive Destination*



# Lapa Rios



Tour & Actividades

My Bungalow

F.A.Q.

Rates

Cuinary Highlights

Honeymoon

Lapa Rios

*"Life speaks a simple language here, giving us the peace to look within ourselves and find an innocence forgotten, letting us embrace the magnificence of this wilderness place"*



### Rainforest wilderness adventure in a class by itself...

Set in a private nature reserve spread over 1,000 acres of Central America's last remaining lowland tropical rainforest in Costa Rica, Lapa Rios Ecolodge overlooks the pristine point where the Golfo Dulce meets the wild Pacific Ocean, making it the destination that matches every one's idea of paradise.

Lapa Rios was built by [John and Karen Lewis](#) as a private nature reserve. A Minnesota couple driven by a vision, John and Karen liquidated all their assets to finance the purchase of a large tract of rainforest and to build the small supporting tourism project. Today a conservation easement elaborated by The Nature Conservancy and Cederena ensure that this rainforest will be preserved into perpetuity. The Lapa Rios reserve is connected through a corridor with [Corcovado National Park](#) on the Osa Peninsula.

Lapa Rios is built in harmony with the surrounding forest and beach environment. The main [lodge and bungalows](#) line three ridges connected by walking paths and steps. Built over 350 feet above the sea, Lapa Rios catches the cooling tropical breezes. The main lodge, housing the [restaurant and bar](#), soars 50 feet and is built of local, natural materials. Palm thatched roofs meet a three-story [hardwood circular stairway](#). Climb to overlook the [forest canopy](#) and breathtaking [ocean vistas](#). Comfortable, locally made bamboo furniture adds to relaxation in this tranquil panorama of nature.

Lapa Rios Ecolodge is more than just a beautiful rainforest hotel or eco resort next to the beach. Lapa Rios is a model [Ecotourism project](#) that strives to show that "a forest left standing is worth more than one cut

Condé Nast  
**Traveler**  
TRUTH IN TRAVEL

- 🏆 Readers Choice Award 2005
- 🏆 Conde Nast Green List 2005
- 🏆 Conde Nast Green List 2004
- 🏆 2003 Conde Nast Top 10 Hotel in Latin America

ANDREW HARPER TRAVEL

- 🏆 World's Best Hotels, Resorts & Hideaways 2005
- 🏆 Andrew Harper's Hideaway of the Year



Corporate Excellence  
Award US Department

## All about CST

What CST is about?  
Evaluation Questionnaire  
Evaluation Guidelines  
Online Self-Evaluation



Certification for  
Sustainable  
Tourism CST

Directory  
of Hotels

## How to Participate

Hotels  
Providers  
Agents

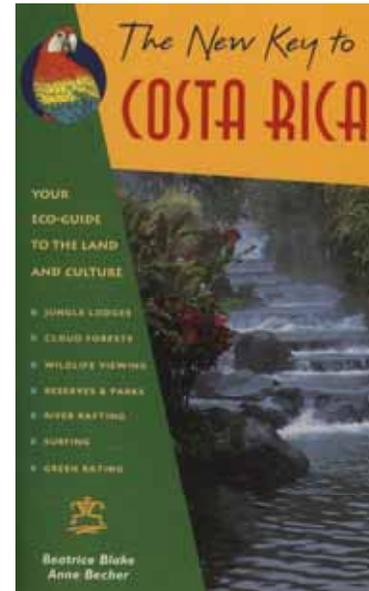


# MARKETING CHALLENGES FOR CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS

- ❖ Certification should not be promoted to businesses as a way to fill their rooms or tours: it won't.
- ❖ Certification will improve overall quality, and clients notice this.
- ❖ Certification will reduce costs for electricity, water, and other supplies.
- ❖ Certification motivates staff and improves image.

# Market Certified Hotels to Intermediaries

- Guidebooks
- The Press
- Tour operators



**TOUR OPERATORS INITIATIVE**

FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT



# Purpose of 'Green' Certification Programs

- ❖ Provide tourists with environmentally and socially responsible choices/ “brands”
- ❖ Increase public awareness of responsible business practices
- ❖ Raise industry standards
- ❖ Provide technical advise to businesses
- ❖ Protect resource base for tourism
- ❖ Government: Protect country's image
- ❖ Provide marketing advantage to those certified





**The International  
Ecotourism  
Society**

*Uniting Conservation, Communities  
and Sustainable Travel*

**Martha Honey, Executive Director**

**The International Ecotourism Society (TIES)**

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**Washington, DC 20005**

**[www.ecotourism.org](http://www.ecotourism.org)**

