

# What Is Responsible Travel?

**DRAGONS DEFINES RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL** as travel that is culturally conscious, environmentally responsible, and economically-aware, focused on developing meaningful connections and mutual respect in the communities to which we travel. Over the course of Dragons' 23 year history, we have cultivated long-standing relationships with respected community leaders, academics, social entrepreneurs and professionals involved in environmental and cultural preservation. In the more than 20 countries in which Dragons has operated, we have steadfastly hewed to minimum impact travel, an accurate and informed understanding of place, and the realization of maximum benefit for the communities we visit.

## HOW DO WE TRAVEL RESPONSIBLY?

- Hiring experienced Western and local staff with deep knowledge of the communities in which they work
- Limiting group sizes to 12 students
- Honoring and respecting local cultures and traditions through:
  - Language learning
  - Dressing modestly in line with local standards
  - Humbly acknowledging what we have to learn from the communities we visit, rather than imposing our own views and culture
- Doing as the locals do, putting our travel dollars into the local economy
  - Not working through agents or Western enterprises that divert funds away from local actors
  - Using public transit
  - Staying in home-stays or at locally-owned guest houses
  - Shopping at community-run stores
  - Eating at local restaurants
  - Consuming locally produced commodities; eschewing imported goods
  - Directly contracting guest-speakers, ISP mentors, internship providers, etc., and compensating them fairly and appropriately
- Planning service projects in line with local interests and needs by:
  - Undertaking projects that have been identified in collaboration with the community
  - Working side-by-side with members of the local community
- Dragons will NEVER participate in any travel that is exploitative of local people or ecosystems
- Modeling our Core Values (humility, compassion, interconnectedness) in interactions with people of all segments of society, regardless of class, gender, ethnicity, or belief-system

**BY TRAVELING THOUGHTFULLY AND RESPONSIBLY**, every Dragons program offers a deep and authentic experience in every country where we travel. This allows our students to grow and learn, to foster cross-cultural understanding through friendship and shared experience, and to make a positive and lasting contribution in the communities we visit.

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