

Responsible Tourism Update

As with the rest of the world, we were shocked and saddened to watch the tsunami and its aftermath unfold across Asia on Boxing Day. The affected regions touched our hearts in particular since they were some of our most popular and well loved destinations. Thankfully friends, colleagues and clients were all unharmed and we became committed to supporting fundraising and the long term recovery of the region.

Initial fundraising efforts exceeded all expectations: as a company we gave an immediate donation of £5,000 to the DEC and a further £10,000 was raised at a fundraising day in conjunction with the residents of Stratton Audley, the village where we are based. Following on from this, we began to research ways in which we could support long term recovery projects and contacted a wide variety of charities. Many leading charities, however, are now refusing to accept donations specifically for these projects. Due to the generosity of the British public, Oxfam report that they have sufficient funds for five years worth of fully funded projects in affected regions. The Thai government has asked not for money, but for much needed tourists to return to the region.

Whilst this is obviously good news for the countries affected, for Audley it meant going back

to the drawing board. We felt that we did not want to commit more donations to a region already overwhelmed with support, particularly when so many other areas in the world also need funding. We decided to put our efforts and commitment into an 'Audley Charity Portfolio' consisting of five organisations tackling a wide variety of issues which reflect our ongoing commitment to Responsible Tourism. The charities are as follows:

Encompass - set up in memory of Daniel Braden, killed in the 2002 Bali bombing, this charity promotes understanding between young people of different cultural backgrounds through education, travel and fellowship.

Friends of Conservation - works worldwide to support community based conservation projects in the struggle to save endangered species and habitats.

Task Brasil - through support, rehabilitation and protection, this organisation helps to improve the lives of children and pregnant teenage girls living on the streets of Brazil.

Schools of Cambodia - this charity funds free education programmes for children in the Siem Reap province. It most recently supported the rebuild of a school at Lolei Temple, part of the

Rolous group at Angkor, an area well visited by Audley.

Climate Care - this organisation helps repair global warming by funding projects around the world to help reduce greenhouse gases. Audley's donations contribute to offsetting the carbon emissions from our staff educational trips.

We have tried to support a wide variety of concerns from human rights issues and education, the environment, to wildlife and conservation. We have selected charities which involve countries across our range of programmes. Our support will include regular annual donations but also ongoing fundraising projects. Further editions of Audley Traveller will carry updates on our progress and how you can help. Further information and links can be found on our website at www.audleytravel.com/charityportfolio.

