



Center for Responsible Travel
Washington, DC and Stanford University
Transforming the Way the World Travels

CREST at a Glance

Mission:

To promote responsible tourism policies and practices globally so that local communities may thrive and steward their cultural resources and biodiversity.

Travel is the world's *largest* economic sector. How big? Today, tourism generates over \$900 billion in export earnings a year; in 4 out of 5 countries, it's one of five top export earners. The number of people traveling overseas has jumped exponentially: 38-fold since 1950. In 2010, 940 million people traveled internationally, and that's expected to reach 1.6 *billion* by 2020.

Travel has the power to do enormous harm to the most beautiful and culturally rich parts of our planet, degrading even its most remote areas quickly and irreparably. But, properly managed, it can do just the opposite.

And yet, surprisingly, there is a dearth of insightful research — to assist decision makers in the responsible development of this huge, widely-scattered industry. When tourism development is *responsibly* managed, when it does incorporate



sustainable best practices, it has the power to bring employment and conservation to areas that otherwise fall prey to clear-cut logging, mining, industrial agriculture, and illegal trade and traffic.

CREST — the Center for Responsible Travel -- is a one of a kind organization recognized for its unbiased, academically rigorous, policy-based research. It examines critical issues for the industry, governments, development agencies, local communities and the traveling public.

Through its offices in Washington DC (the hub for NGOs and international agencies) and at Stanford University (highly regarded for research and scholarly integrity), CREST works to “transform the way the world travels.”

CREST pursues this mission via three concrete goals:

- **Alleviate Poverty** – supporting self-sufficiency and entrepreneurship in communities through tourism;
- **Conserve Bio-Diversity** – promoting positive environmental footprints through travel;
- **Protect Cultures** – directly engaging tourists in preserving and experiencing authentic peoples and places.

CREST acts as the travel sector's conscience, guiding it in responsible directions and, when necessary, reminding it of its failings. Entirely independent and unbiased, CREST believes travel, done right, should be a force for preserving environments and cultures, and building sustainable communities in tourism destinations.

Its accomplishments range from international conferences on travelers' philanthropy and on innovations in coastal tourism, to research on the impacts of cruise and all-inclusive resort tourism, to programs that empower indigenous peoples.

CREST's research demonstrates that different types of tourism have very different economic, social, and environmental impacts on host destinations. Here are a few of CREST's findings:

Founded in 2003, CREST has developed 5 successful program areas designed to deliver the best practices and principles in ways that protect communities and conservation:

- Global leader in Travelers' Philanthropy
- Setting standards and strengthening responsible tourism
- Analyzing impacts of different models of tourism and promoting innovation
- Paid consulting and field research
- Sharing expertise and providing leadership

Its scores of publications include 3 published books, and many peer reviewed articles.

- **Ecotourism:** In Costa Rica, ecotourism took off in 1987 and, over the next two decades, tourism arrivals grew 7-fold while tourism earnings grew 14-fold – meaning Costa Rica was earning two times more per tourist than before the ecotourism boom started. Average monthly income of those working in ecotourism lodges in the Osa Peninsula is nearly twice as high as those not working in tourism.
- **Cruise tourism:** In Central America (Honduras, Belize and Costa Rica), the land based stay over tourism sector generates 14-23 times more money than the cruise tourism sector. In these countries, the average stay over tourist spends 6-15 times more than the typical cruise passenger.
- **Travelers' philanthropy:** Travelers' philanthropy is generating tens of millions of dollars each year from tourists and tourism businesses for projects in host communities, beyond what is generated through the normal tourism business. In the Galapagos, one company, Lindblad Expeditions, raised \$4.5 million in travelers' donations in ten years.
- **Innovators in Coastal Development:** CREST is bringing together scores of tourism developers, designers, and operators in the Americas committed to creating more socially and environmentally responsible large-scale resorts.

Transforming the way the world travels is absolutely necessary. Join with us! Contact CREST to explore ways to get involved.

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