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Studienkreis für Tourismus und Entwicklung e. V.

Bahnhofstraße 8
82229 Seefeld

Tel. +49 8152 99901-0
Fax +49 9152 99901-66

info@studienkreis.org
www.studienkreis.org

Vorstand Hans Ulrich Schudel
GF Claudia Mitteneder

Vereinsregister Nr. 100 542
Amtsgericht München

USt-ID DE 811659075

Impressive Anniversary: TO DO Award – At Home In The World for 25 Years

Projects from Iran and Cambodia will be honoured with the TO DO Award 2020 for Socially Responsible Tourism; 25th edition of the international project contest with a new record number of entries

Seefeld, 04/02/2020 – Two community-based tourism projects, from Iran and Cambodia, are the winners of the international contest TO DO Award 2020 and will be honoured as outstanding examples of socially responsible tourism. The award has since 1995 been organised annually by the Institute for Tourism and Development (Studienkreis für Tourismus und Entwicklung). The award ceremony will take place on 5 March 2020 at 16:30 at Palais am Funkturm at ITB Berlin.

Among a total of 37 project applications, the two contest winners have convinced the juries with their approaches of forms of tourism with positive effects in terms of ecological, economic and social sustainability.

Iran: Esfahk Historic Village

In 1978, a devastating earthquake in South Khorasan Province destroyed many traditional villages with mud houses; including the desert village of Esfahk where many inhabitants died in the wake of the natural disaster. Within a short time, the survivors built an entirely new village – without completely tearing down the remains of the damaged houses. Much later, their efforts of cautiously reconstructing the old village by themselves brought the different generations close together. The reconstruction plan included creating, without external investors, amidst the ruins of the destroyed village, an important centre of cultural heritage that could be used for tourism. In the meantime, seven guest houses were renovated or rebuilt earthquake-proof in old mudbrick style. The mosque, the former hammam, a restaurant, a coffee house and a shop for local handicraft complement the range of offers. In the new tourism facilities community members found secure jobs and receive around 3,500 overnight guests annually, both domestic and international.

Cambodia: Banteay Chhmar Community Based Tourism

The temple complex of Banteay Chhmar, after which it was named, is at the

heart of the *Banteay Chhmar Community Based Tourism Initiative* in the North West of Cambodia. The temple complex built in the 12th century is regarded as one of the country's most important cultural treasures. In this unique setting the villagers of the four adjacent communities offer authentic insights into village life. Tourists may book various home stays. Direct insights into the daily lives of the inhabitants are also part of the touristic offer. For example, guests may accompany local farmers on a traditional ox cart to harvest paddy, or they will learn how to prepare local dishes. Since 2006 a democratically elected committee, has been managing all the touristic activities. The objective is to create new income opportunities in addition to the cultivation of manioc and paddy. More than 90 families directly benefit from jobs in tourism. A village development fund is used to finance measures that benefit all the villagers.

TO DO Award 2020: Perspectives for Sustainable Tourism

The projects awarded with the TO DO Award 2020 contribute significantly to the creation of economic, ecological and social perspectives for local people, to improving their living conditions and to reducing migration from rural communities to the larger cities. In the planning phase as well as during the actual implementation, the interests of the local population are given priority. Furthermore, the projects can help to preserve people's cultural identity and promote equal opportunities, diversity and - in this way - social progress.

Claudia Mitteneder, executive director of the Institute for Tourism and Development: „For years, the number of applications for the TO DO Award has been increasing continuously. With 37 projects from 21 countries and four continents we have reached a new record in 2020. This could be an indication that there is a growing number of socially responsible players and project organisers who understand tourism as an opportunity for economic and socio-political development. For 25 years, the Institute for Tourism and Development has supported and promoted such concepts which are meant to serve as models for other regions and communities. With the presentation of the TO DO and this year's winners at ITB we also provide these projects with a platform for communication and networking to contribute to their future development".

After the applications had been screened by a 12-member expert jury, the two projects were first nominated for the TO DO Award 2020. The Institute for Tourism and Development then sent an expert to check these projects on location. Both assessments turned out positive, so that representatives of the projects from Iran and Cambodia will be presented with the awards on 5 March 2020 at ITB in Berlin. The public award ceremony will take place at 16:30 at

Palais am Funkturm on the ITB trade fair grounds. Representatives of the projects will be present and will receive the awards.

Please also visit us at our information booth at ITB in hall 4.1, stand 242. Meetings can already be arranged.

Studienkreis für Tourismus und Entwicklung (Institute for Tourism and Development) focuses on development related information and education in tourism. In this context it brings out publications, organises international contests, offers training and seminars for people employed in the tourism sector, carries out tourism research and consultancy, and is involved in dialogue on issues related to tourism development.

Contact for the press:

Studienkreis für Tourismus und Entwicklung e. V.
Claudia Mitteneder, Executive Director
Phone: +49 8152 99901-0 | info@studienkreis.org