

## CHARITY TOURISM

### Definition

Charity or aid tourism refers to trips taken to destinations for the purpose of assisting host communities by providing services that help in everyday life, or aid to disaster areas. This form of tourism has broadened out in recent years ranging from lengthy trips that involve construction work, community development, and/or conservation, to one or two day contributions, such as litter clearing whilst on a trek.



### Estimate of Global Market Size

The global market size is currently estimated at 250,000 per annum, of which around one quarter (65,000) is US travellers going overseas to take part in volunteer vacations.

### Potential for Growth

The so-called "gap year" (i.e. students taking a year off to travel either before or after studying at university) is seen by the youth of industrialised countries as virtually a rite of passage and, with the major contributor to charity tourism coming from gap year students (estimated at around 60%), this market is set to grow at a sustained and substantial rate over coming decades.

Consumer attitudes towards sustaining the world we live in are becoming increasingly intense, and in consequence, caring for the planet's natural resources and poor societies, is assuming a higher priority for large numbers of people. It can be assumed therefore that more people will actively seek to include themselves in conservation and other related projects, pushing up the demand for charity tourism. The growth of charity tourism is also being driven by post-career travellers (typically the over 55 age group). As the baby boom population (those born between 1946-1964) are increasingly active and travel more than their predecessors, so charity tourism will experience an increase in numbers from this segment of the population.

### Brief Profile of Consumers

The two largest groups are: the gap year traveller i.e. people aged 18-23, who choose to experience different cultures, usually on a round-the-world ticket; and the over 55 age groups – typically post-career - who are interested in charity tourism.

Travellers tend to be well educated, and in the ABC1 socio-economic groups. Within the UK market, almost half of all private school pupils take gap years, compared with about one in five students overall.

**Main Source Markets**

- United States
- Canada
- Western Europe
- Australia
- New Zealand

**Main Competing Destinations**

Most trips tend to be to the world's poorest countries, typically these are situated in Africa and Asia: Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Lesotho, Nepal and Tanzania are some of the most popular charity tourism destinations in recent years.

Other destinations become popular for charity tourism due to natural disasters (and sometimes man-made disasters), such as the tsunami in South and South East Asia.

**Key Tour Operators**

Private companies, and charity organisations that work closely with travel agents to promote their trips and arrange flights dominate the market. A leading operator is i-to-i, which is not a charity itself but does operate a charity arm, the i-to-i Foundation, to support its most needy projects.

***i-to-i***

United Kingdom

<http://www.i-to-i.com>

Woodside House, 261 Low Lane, Leeds, LS18 5NY

Tel: (+44) 0800 011 1156

***Raleigh International***

United Kingdom

<http://www.raleigh.org.uk>

Third Floor, 207 Waterloo Road, London SE1 8XD

Tel: (+44) 20 7183 1270

Fax: (+44) 207 504 8094

***Idealist***

United States

<http://www.idealists.org>

360 West 31st Street, Suite 1510, New York, NY 10001

Tel: 1 212 843 3973

***Earthwatch***

United States (and worldwide)

<http://www.earthwatch.org>

3 Clock Tower Place, Suite 100, Box 75, Maynard, MA 01754

Tel: 1 800 776 0188, (978) 461 0081

Fax: (978) 461-2332

**Travelworks**

Germany

<http://www.travelworks.de>

Travelplus Group GmbH, Münsterstrasse 111, 48155 Münster

Email: [info@travelworks.de](mailto:info@travelworks.de)

**Key Points for Marketing and Distribution**

Should to be marketed primarily at gap year students, and therefore by contacting specific student travel based companies such as STA (based internationally, especially in the UK and US). Direct mail to students associations at universities & colleges can be a particularly effective means of generating interest.

Some leading tour operators are looking to increase charity tourism in their portfolios. Explore ([www.explore.co.uk](http://www.explore.co.uk)) is introducing a volunteering element into their holidays in 2008, and Virgin Holidays has pledged to include a responsible travel aspect in its travel agent familiarisation trips, with a view to adding such elements to future programmes.

Responsible Travel provides a directory of carefully screened holidays run by hundreds of specialist operators and accommodations.  
<http://www.responsibletravel.com>

Travel magazines that are of particular relevance to charity tourism are:

*Canada: Outpost*

<http://outpostmagazine.com>

*International: Brave New Traveller*

<http://www.bravenewtraveler.com>

*United Kingdom: Wanderlust*

<http://www.wanderlust.co.uk>

*United Kingdom: Real Travel*

<http://www.i-dj.co.uk/realtravel>

**Social Networks**

Yahoo for Good

<http://forgood.yahoo.com>

**Additional Information**

**General Information**

*Advice for international volunteers*

<http://www.ethicalvolunteering.org>

Promoting responsible tourism

<http://www.charitychallenge.com>

Responsible and ethical tourism charity

<http://www.tourismconcern.org.uk>

***Organisations/Institutions in the Caribbean***

*CCC: Caribbean Conservation Corporation to ensure the survival of sea turtles within the wider Caribbean basin and Atlantic.*

<http://cccturtle.org>

*CCA: Caribbean Conservation Association*

<http://www.ccanet.net>