

**TO DO!2001**  
**Contest Socially Responsible Tourism**

***Award Winner***

***THE TOURISM PROJECT***  
***BASIS INTERNATIONAL***

represented by

**Dr. Mathew and Leelamony Moozhiyil,  
Directors and Founders of the BASIS Project**

**Sreekandamangalam, Township of Athirampuzha,  
Federal State of Kerala, India**

**Rationale for the Award**

by

**Dr. Hermann Warth**

“The poetry of travel lies in the organic absorption of newly acquired knowledge, in the increase of our understanding of the unity in diversity, and in rediscovering old truths and laws under completely new circumstances”  
Herman Hesse

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The expert appraiser visited the State of Kerala in Southern India from 14th-19th November 2001 on assignment from Studienkreis für Tourismus und Entwicklung e.V. (Institute for Tourism and Development). The object of his visit was to evaluate the BASIS INTERNATIONAL project with a registered office in Sreekandamangalam (“The City of Shiva”). The small village belongs to the township of Athirampuzha (pronounced Athirampura) and is located in the Kottayam district. The Project was entered into the TO DO!2001 contest by its German co-operation partner Waschbär-Reisen GmbH, Ballrechten.

Thanks to the excellent support provided by the BASIS staff and especially by BASIS co-founders, Leelamony and Mathew Moozhiyil (pronounced Murhiyil) the assignment could be completed without any complications. The expert appraiser gained comprehensive insights into the working methods and organisational structure of BASIS. The most important observations of the expert appraiser were discussed with the Moozhiyil family before the return trip. The expert appraiser recommends awarding the BASIS INTERNATIONAL PROJECT with a TO DO! Prize at the ITB 2002 in recognition of the concept, aims and success of the project.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

With 33 million inhabitants, Kerala is the most densely populated state in India after West Bengal. Since the largest portion of the mainly rural population (app. 22 million) lives in scattered villages, “underneath trees” in the midst of the farmland, one does not get the impression of crowded conditions and overpopulation. The aerial view shows expansive forests interspersed with patches of cleared land. The “wilderness” is comprised mainly of palms and rubber trees (Kerala means “the country of palms”), amongst which the villages are located. The “land clearings” are really tea plantations and rice fields.

Geographically, Kerala is divided into three regions: the coastal region (with a network of intertwined creeks and lagoons extending far into the interior, or so-called “backwaters”), the central uplands and the highlands (the so-called “Western Ghats”, with mountains that reach up to 2,700 meters above sea level). Kerala has a rich variety of flora and fauna, which however is impaired by monocultures: in the lower areas by India rubber, in the higher planes by tea, coffee and cardamom plantations (rubber growers are subsidised by the government, and plantations are excluded from the land reform). About 25 percent of India’s 15,000 plant varieties growing on arable land or grassland and, in the tropical rain forest and cloud forest are in this region. Two thirds of Kerala’s 3,750 plant varieties are endemic to the region. This rich plant habitat provides a home to an exceptionally diverse animal kingdom: About 100 varieties of mammals, 550 varieties of birds and 170 types of reptiles cohabitate in this region, including antelopes, gazelles, tigers, leopards, buffalo, wild boar, wild dogs, elephants, various kinds of monkeys, bears, crocodiles, turtles and snakes. The animals live in and outside the 13 national parks and animal preserves, but are nevertheless exposed to hazards through monoculture, dams, deforestation, erosion, river silting, poaching, overfishing, industrial waste and pesticides.

Kerala’s coastal region combines foreign influences with a variety of religious denominations. About 20 percent of the population is Christian, another 20 percent Muslim, and nearly 60

percent Hindus (compared to 2, 10, and 88 percent for all of India). Moreover, there is also a small group of Jews. In the home community of BASIS INTERNATIONAL, in Sreekandamangalam or Athirampuzha, however, the Christian population predominates.

Churches, mosques, temples and synagogues are living testimony to the diversity of religious life in the region. No significant religious conflicts are known to exist. However, the fact that the Christian churches and Muslims are receiving increasing financial support from abroad, whilst Hindus are left to their own resources, and the fact that some Christian communities celebrate their main religious holidays with great pomp, noisily drowning the Hindus with loudspeakers, could possibly jeopardise this peaceful coexistence one day.

The caste system in Kerala is very pronounced. The caste etiquette - particularly for interaction among the castes - is generally observed very strictly. Even Christians are divided into two castes: It was declared that the descendants of Hindus who had converted to Christianity up to the onset of British colonial rule belong to the (Christian) Brahmin caste and that Christians converting during British colonial rule and their descendants are lower caste, since many Hindus who let themselves be baptised during that period were from the lower castes.<sup>1</sup> The Hindu Brahmins practised a patrilineal inheritance system, whilst the hierarchy of the lower castes was matrilineal - something which, however, does not preclude the general practice of patriarchal decision making. The work of Mahatma Gandhi and his disciples - in Kerala and particularly in Sree Narayana Guru - have rendered the caste system somewhat less rigid; however, certainly not sufficiently enough, as attested to by the fiery accusations made by Arundhati Roy, an author from the Kottayam District, in her book "The god of small things".

Kerala has the highest literacy rate in all of India. It ranges between 90 and 100 percent depending on the age group. At the same time, this state has the largest percentage of unemployed persons with high professional qualifications. This is attributable to the fact that Kerala's industrialisation is not very advanced, and the dominant sectors are export-oriented industries such as agriculture, forestry, plantation farming and fisheries (with products such as India rubber, coconut products, tapioca, lemon grass oil, tea, coffee, spices, and cardamom).

The subsistence mixed-culture economy has so strongly declined that it is forced to import meat, vegetables and grains. Kerala has a below-average per capita income and is one of the poorest states of India. Ironically, this state of things is also due to the halfway successful land reform and high educational levels: Machinery cannot be economically used on the small plots of land held by many owners, and the high level of education has led to the cultural devaluation of vocational and farming work, which has come to be viewed as inferior, in preference of the more desirable and prestigious "white collar jobs". The related risk of remaining unemployed over long periods is frequently accepted. Furthermore, the government quotas for university admissions of students from all castes into programmes which would prepare them for civil service, have encouraged many members of the lower castes to venture into the public service track, and this, in turn, only further aggravates the shortage of craftsmen.

---

<sup>1</sup> Ebermut Rudolph, *Indische Reise (Trip to India)*, 1971, p. 64 et seq., offers another explanation: The caste system of Christians in Southern India „dates back to the period of immigration of Mesopotamian Christians during the second half of the first millennium. These were given extensive privileges by the Hindu rulers in their new domicile, which for all practical purposes gave them an almost equal status with the highly revered Hindu caste of the 'Nayars'... They settled south of the indigenous Christians, which is how they got the name of "Southists"; the Christians to the north subsequently came to be called "Northists"... Even today, the "Southists" still avoid mixing with the "Northists".

Kerala has great ecological and socio-cultural tourism potential that is neither fully explored nor fully utilised. Therefore, Kerala's Department of Tourism recently approved the development of master plans for the coastal, backwater, and mountain regions (Western Ghats).

### **3. THE TOURISM PROJECT BASIS INTERNATIONAL AS PART OF THE BASIS PROJECT VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT**

#### **3.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

BASIS INTERNATIONAL is a part of BASIS Projects. BASIS is the abbreviation for "Basic Agricultural and Social Improvement Schemes". BASIS Projects was founded in May 1990 by Dr. Mathew Moozhiyil and his wife Mrs. Leelamony Moozhiyil in Sreekandamangalam. Both had previously lived and worked in Germany for 20 years; he as an agricultural scientist and she as a medical nurse.

After their return to Kerala the couple purchased a two-hectare plot of land with house in Sreekandamangalam, which had belonged to a former rubber plantation owner, in part with private funding from Germany. The Moozhiyils replaced the damaging monoculture<sup>2</sup> with adapted mixed crops (coconuts, papaya, mango, jackfruit, bananas, pineapple, cinnamon, nutmeg, spice clove, pepper, tuber fruits, rice). This approach has led to successful self-sustenance of about 20 persons per year. Any surplus produce is sold and provides the basic funds for subsequent project initiatives. The mixed crops on the compound of the Moozhiyil family are supplemented by livestock (cows, pigs, goats, chickens), whose waste is used as fertiliser, thus creating a balanced biological cycle. Moreover, the building of guest accommodations, kitchen and dining area next to the residence of the Moozhiyil family was financed from their own savings. Meanwhile, this infrastructure serves as the material base for the activities of BASIS INTERNATIONAL .

#### **3.2 ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE AND FINANCING**

BASIS Projects is a private family trust, which also comprises of two commercially, financially and legally separate enterprises, namely BASIS INTERNATIONAL and BASIS Handproducts. Both are income producing and pay income taxes. The profits are not for the benefit of the Moozhiyil family but rather flow back into the activities of the trust. The enterprises are registered with the government of Kerala. Registration is not legally required for the trust and no taxes are levied on the sale of raw agricultural products.

BASIS Projects currently has a staff of 25 full-time workers and five seasonal workers (predominantly low-caste Hindus). The staff rotates among the various areas in accordance with the work demand and suitability. Wages are paid from the proceeds in those areas that are prospering at the time, depending on the situation.<sup>3</sup> These temporary shifts are documented in the bookkeeping records. The tourist staff includes one travel guide, a driver, a cook, a cleaning woman, and two "allrounders". Leelamony and her daughter Theresa Moozhiyil likewise assist with the daily trips.

---

<sup>2</sup> Rubber trees secrete significant amounts of Prussic acid, so that hardly anything can grow on the ground beneath them, no birds nest in them, and the falling leaves are dangerous for goats and cows. Rubber trees are deep rooters which cause a lowering of the groundwater level, so that even in water rich Kerala there is a shortage of drinking water during the dry months in those areas where there are rubber plantations.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. BASIS Handproducts had almost no earnings in 1998 and the beginning of 1999. Thus, the wages of the staff at the sewing and art school were paid out of the earnings of BASIS INTERNATIONAL.

BASIS INTERNATIONAL has six double rooms, a kitchen wing and a dining / lounge area for its use. A house is being constructed which can accommodate a large family. Also under construction is the Ayurvedic clinic with accommodations for eight persons for long-term physical and psychological treatment. Upon request visitors can be referred to lodging accommodations with four farming families of the district ("homestead tourism"). Two offices, computers and a small bus with 15 seats complete the material infrastructure of the project.

The overall project has a financial volume of 30,000 - 50,000 Euro per year. About a third of the total comes from sales of BASIS Handproducts, from BASIS INTERNATIONAL and donations of the Gießen-based help organization „Förderkreis Indienhilfe e.V“, which guarantees a minimum donation of nearly 10,000 Euro per year.

### 3.3 OBJECTIVES AND MAIN ACTIVITIES

The objective of the village development project was formulated by the Moozhiyil family on the basis of the problem analysis of their location as follows:

**“The goal is to give the male and female inhabitants of the village<sup>4</sup> the possibility to develop their independence and improve their living situation through their own initiative.”**

With a view to realising these goals the project has developed a variety of activities. This includes training and continuing education for interested inhabitants on subjects such as:

- Agriculture and animal husbandry (Mixed crops and cyclical planting)
- Sewing and knitting at the sewing school (BASIS Handproducts)
- Painting and silk-screen printing at the art school (BASIS Handproducts)
- Book binding in the book binding workshop (BASIS Handproducts)
- Production of furniture, tools, jewellery for own use in various workshops
- Dance and home economics

Thus far, approximately 1,000 persons have been trained in the various occupations.

For a monthly charge of 50 Rupees participating (and non-participating) parents can take their small children to the project's kindergarten, where the children can learn through games and not through rote and force.

Each year in April and May a four-week holiday programme is provided for up to 100 school children from the area with a view to reducing social isolation and offering alternatives to the rigid school system.

Drinking water facilities and toilets were build together with the village residents, who also donated of their own time and money to the project. Emergency aid (partially in the form of loans) and support for home construction (also through getting cheap bank loans) for persons abandoned by their families (e.g. due to love marriage), for single parents and disabled persons, as well as basic medical care and counselling (by Mrs. Moozhiyil) complement the activities spectrum.

---

<sup>4</sup> The core activities are currently limited to the Athirampuzha area which has app. 35,000 inhabitants. Sreekandamangalam is a part of Athirampuzha and has app. 3,000 inhabitants.

**The aim of BASIS INTERNATIONAL is**

- 1. The advancement of mutual acceptance through introducing visitors to the full range of problems and solutions/solution possibilities in the village and region and**
- 2. The economic advancement of the local population through the presence of the guests.**

The extensive village development project is an exemplary vehicle - a micro- and macro-cosmos of Kerala, India, as well as a paragon of a learning model.

To promote international exchanges and self-development, from 1990 - 1997, thirteen six-week **international work camps** were held in the framework of the project. The camps were attended by 130 young adults between the ages of 18 and 26, who helped out in the various village development areas according to their abilities and interests. The programme, which was funded by the German Ministry for Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, was discontinued in 1997 due to lack of funding.

For the advancement of international exchanges and in order to get the necessary action research based support on professional issues, BASIS has regularly applied for **ASA scholarships (work-study stays)** with the Carl Duisberg Gesellschaft (CDG) since 1996. Thus far, 14 students have already completed their programmes and three students are still in the process.

The Ayurvedic clinic is approaching completion. It will offer guests the opportunity to experience holistic Asian healing methods and to engage in intensive intercultural encounters.

The **actual tourism programme** has been operating with the support of the Waschbär-Reisen travel agency, Ballrechten, Germany since 1997. Up to four times a year 10-12 persons visit the project for three weeks. The regular programme includes a one-week round trip through Kerala and Tamil Nadu, daily outings, boat trips in the backwaters region, elephant rides, integration in the project work and many discussions with the project staff. The programme can be structured flexibly, e.g. through stays with local families (up to now: spice growers, tea farmers, general farmers, fishers, and the spectrum is growing). Changes are made without negatively affecting the nature and purpose of the visit.

The "India for Family" programme has been offered since Autumn 2001. Up to twice a year (Autumn and Christmas holidays) 6-12 persons are taken in for the purpose of learning about Indian village life, schools, markets, festivals, and the flora and fauna. In addition, children oriented programmes are offered.

#### **4. ASSESSMENT**

The evaluation of BASIS INTERNATIONAL against the TODO! criteria for socially responsible tourism resulted in the following assessment:

**Contest Criterion:****Addressing the various interests and needs of the local population through participation.**

BASIS INTERNATIONAL is integrated in the continually growing village development project, which even performs government functions, since the government either does not or qualitatively inadequately performs its assigned responsibilities (examples: drinking water supply, medical supplies, kindergarten). The project is a self-help undertaking: with the exception of cases of extreme need<sup>5</sup> nothing is provided free-of-charge in any of the sectors.

- The inner core of the project is comprised of the Moozhiyil family and the staff of 25-30 workers. According to information provided by Mathew Moozhiyil weekly meetings are held with the staff to discuss the requirements of the BASIS Projects: about the planning and implementation of measures and the application of proceeds, as well as about the results of the weekly programme evaluations submitted by the tourists. The meetings are documented in minutes, in order to enable subsequent examination of work assignments and the extent to which they have been implemented. The meetings make a strong contribution to the coherent organization of the team.
- The staff can at any time look into the three accounts: donations, BASIS Handproducts and BASIS INTERNATIONAL .

Participation is enhanced through mutual acceptance<sup>6</sup>, as illustrated by the fact that

- a large number of measures have already been realised despite the high levels of own work and contribution involved,
- every village resident can inspect the costs involved in the measures,
- Mathew Moozhiyil is invited to community council meetings as “resource person” and asked to speak on issues relating to farming, tourism, and water supply,
- government offices at the commune level send their staff to the Moozhiyil model farm for know-how exchanges (esp. Agriculture Officer, Veterinary Officer, College staff from the Department of Botany),
- tourists are frequently invited by village residents to the village festivals, family events, and boat outings.

---

<sup>5</sup> Even in such cases BASIS first conducts an examination of the self-help capacity of the respective families, their neighbours, friends and the funds of the churches, mosques and Hindu temple communities. BASIS views itself as an instance of “last resort”, after it has been demonstrated that the above mentioned possibilities are not viable.

<sup>6</sup> Due to its equitable caste treatment the Project was rejected by “Christian Brahmins” incl. pastors until 1997, Muslims responded neutrally and Hindus welcomed it.

**Contest Criterion:****Strengthening the awareness among the local people with regard to the chances and risks of tourism development in their everyday economic, social and cultural life.**

- The current tourist programmes (three weeks) are evaluated by the clients three times on the average. The results are discussed in the weekly staff meetings. Since the staff members live with their families in the village and not in the compound the discussion about the chances and risks of tourism is kept alive (one person represents five to six family members).
- Homestead tourists are only referred after the participating families have entered into a dialogue on this subject and the household has been appropriately trained. According to our information, further efforts to involve additional families are underway.
- The contact of the people of Sreekandamangalam with visitors who for years walk around their village, drink tea, shop, “don’t have any caste prejudices and recognise only less differences between the sexes“ frequently leads to questioning of the stringent caste mentality“ (Schubert, 1999, p. 18). This is difficult to prove; however, it can be assumed that such awareness processes are possible.
- The economic chances for development for the general village development brought by tourism are recognised by the local population: Six jobs were created in the purely tourist area of the project (BASIS INTERNATIONAL). The workshops (BASIS Handproducts) produce goods for the holiday tourists, the hotel and for export (*Waschbär-Reisen, Team-Versand, Osnabrück, Förderkreis Indien, Gießen*). After taxes, the profits from both enterprises are used for the salaries/investments of staff and Farmers/ craftsmen in the general village development described above.

**Contest Criterion:****Participation of a broad local population strata regarding the positive economic, social and cultural effects of tourism.**Economic:

- Waschbär-Reisen transfers 45.00 Euro per tourist per day to BASIS INTERNATIONAL. Of this total 20 percent are used for food and lodging at the compound or in homestead families, 20 percent for travel expenses and admission tickets, 20 percent for salaries and 20 percent as taxable profit. The after tax profit is invested in village development measures. What this means is that, with the exception of the lodging expenses at the compound and travel expenses for the BASIS-owned bus, all the money is used for the benefit of the population: the BASIS staff, homestead families, food merchants, temple-, mosque- and church congregations, the beneficiaries of the village development and the government (taxes).
- Moreover, the guests also bring earnings to the various workshops (sewing school, art school, book binding workshop), which contributes to the income of their staff and trainees.
- Visitors also spend money in the village and region when they visit tea shops and restaurants and when they buy popular high value products, e.g. spices, tea, coffee, ayurvedic medication. The project refers interested tourists to shop owners who can prove that the production and processing of their goods are in accordance with ecological criteria.

### Social:

- The overall programme is administered exclusively by local staff (the project staff, homestead families, dancers, musicians, etc.). Despite the initial resistance, the project is persistently aimed at equality of treatment for men and women and amongst the different castes.
- As already presented BASIS is an integrated project, so that a separation of the areas compound, handproducts, tourism, and village development is not possible, or indeed even intended. Thus, it should be mentioned once again that the overall project has already trained app. 1,000 people in various occupations. Up to now, no follow-up studies on the trainees or a socio-economic impact analysis have been carried out.

### Cultural:

- The tourists are introduced to the various religions and their symbols which are frequently in close proximity to one another (temples, mosques, churches) in discussions and information during their trips. The demonstrated interest among the guests probably encourages the population to perceive this religious diversity as enriching.
- This is also owed to the targeted tourist visits to farmers, who practice mixed crop agriculture, as these ecological producers are thus also strengthened in their conviction that they are doing the right thing. They can certainly use such positive reinforcement since their colleagues in the vicinity can achieve higher short-term gains through the use of monoculture and chemicals.

### **Contest Criterion:**

#### **Assurance of attractive jobs in tourism for the local population by improvement of working conditions in relation to payment, social security, working hours, education and training.**

- The 25-30 employees of the overall project belong to different castes. The majority of the two lowest castes of the five-tiered Indian caste system (which has an infinite number of subsidiary gradations). Thus, for example, the travel guide belongs to the fifth and lowest caste. According to statements, which could not be sufficiently verified during the six-day visit, over the years initial friction has given room to normal interaction among colleagues. Not to have to suffer because of a caste affiliation also makes the project interesting for prospective employees when restaffing jobs or staffing newly created jobs.
- In accordance with the work demands, the 25-30 employees of the overall project work in different areas. This is viewed as an enriching experience since such temporary changes prevent the setting in of the routine and help expand the spectrum of personal abilities. The travel guide was educated in Germany and speaks good German. Further staff that was also educated for the tourism sector includes a travel guide, a driver, and a medical nurse. In the case of increased work demand they will also be seasonally assigned.

- There are no written employment contracts - while founded in the traditional oral communication culture in India, this practice can lead to uncertainty and dependency among employees. The oral contracts provide for the following conditions:
  - A monthly base salary of 3,000<sup>7</sup> Rupees for all. If business is running well, the difference up to the agreed salary amount is paid/subsequently paid (the highest salary is 6,000 Rupees). To compensate this uncertainty the contract provides for a job guarantee and one free meal per day.
  - Twenty percent of the salary of unmarried employees and ten percent of the salaries of married employees are paid into the pension fund, which is remitted with interest upon departure from the project and into a rotating fund, from which employees can draw repayable financing based on lots.
  - Employees can receive a six-month loan from the Project at five percent interest; the interest is paid into a kitty, the proceeds of which go into financing a group outing with the employees as a “team-building” measure.
  - Free medication and treatment of simple cases by Mrs. Moozhiyil.
  - Salary bonuses for holidays, weddings, births, start of school, death, residential construction.
  - Working hours from 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. as at government offices.
  - Annual holiday in accordance with government regulations: variable depending on family events.

Many contractual components are commonplace in India. Two innovative and attractive components are certainly the job guarantee - a valuable commodity in view of the high unemployment rate in Kerala - and the flexible assignments in the various project areas, which enable giving the job guarantee and significantly contributes to continued educational training.

#### **Contest Criterion:**

#### **Reinforcement of the local culture and cultural identity of people living in the tourist target areas**

- The buildings in the compound are built in the traditional style of architecture. Particularly successful examples are the Ayurvedic treatment area and the nearly completed Ayurvedic clinic. Whenever old houses in the village are torn down, and valuable parts are to be dumped as scrap or burned, they are gathered by the project, fixed or renovated and integrated into the project building at the right places.
- The cultural importance of Ayurveda (life science) has been given a lot of attention, not last through the education and hiring of an Ayurvedic cook.
- Great respect for the religious plurality of Kerala is engendered through preparing tourists through holding talks with them before taking them to see temples, churches, mosques and festivals.
- The demonstration on mixed crops on the compound and the targeted visit and encouragement of farmers who are committed to the traditional mixed crops and ecological farming has already been mentioned. Furthermore, those involved in the processing and sales of such products are also encouraged by bringing them to the attention of the tourists.

---

<sup>7</sup> The minimum daily wage in Kerala is Rs. 150, which corresponds to a monthly wage of Rs. 4,500, however without a guarantee of full employment for any month; BASIS has a minimum daily wage of Rs. 100, which corresponds to a monthly wage of Rs. 3,000, but with an attached job guarantee, and - if good business results are achieved - the monthly wage can reach as high as Rs. 6,000; in addition, “lean months” are compensated at a subsequent date.

- The Moozhiyil family, which is well versed in both cultures, the Hindu-Christian-Moslem of Kerala and the Christian-secular of Germany, view themselves as “ambassadors between the cultures” (Moozhiyil): When the opportunity allows, they provide insights into the pros and cons of both cultures - which is an important catalyst to self-reflection and identity searching in these days of accelerated globalisation in a shrinking world.
- The project promotes the traditional Indian temple dance “Kathakali” either through visits or through invitations of male and female dancers and musicians: Does this signify the commercialisation and demystification or a strengthening of the local culture? The female author Arundhati Roy who grew up in the Kottayam District of Kerala has something to say on the subject (The God of Small Things, 262): “In Ayemenem they dance out ... their truncated swimming pool fantasies. Their flight to tourism in order stave off death from starvation. On the way back .. they returned to the temple to ask their gods for forgiveness. To apologise for the corruption of their stories. To apologise for selling out their identity for money. Embezzled their lives.”

The appraiser visited a Kathakali demonstration in the compound together with Waschbär tourists. It was a dignified experience: The music instruments were blessed, there was prayer before and after the dance and each dance began with an explanatory introduction. In a subsequent talk it was explained that these dances, which tell stories from the Indian national epic “Mahabharata“ can be presented at any time independently from the corresponding festivals; as long as the appropriate context and correct behaviour of the viewers is present. Moreover, an important piece of history is being kept alive and the female dances regain the respect and dignity they had enjoyed in earlier times and later lost during the years of British colonial rule, when their dances were declared to be vulgar and dancers were suspected of prostitution.

#### **Contest Criterion:**

#### **Avoidance/minimisation of social and cultural damage caused by tourism in target areas.**

- BASIS tries to satisfy this criterion through limiting the annual tourist numbers and through decentralisation. In order not to overburden the social and cultural capacity of Sreekandamangalam (and to enable the Moozhiyil family phases of regeneration) a maximum of 48 holiday tourists divided into four group tours of three-week duration are accommodated. Meanwhile the project has gained such a high acceptance level, that the annual number of visitors can be increased. The tourists live partly with the homestead families outside the project site and spend a good portion of the three weeks travelling in Southern India.
- The programme components are discussed with the guests before and after their realisation: ad hoc on the way or in the dining room of the compound, where the common evening meal is generally used for pre- and post-preparatory discussion. Informational material and a library are two more valuable tools.
- The idea of integrating the relatively small tourism sector into the large and complex village development project helps guests to stop viewing themselves as traditional tourists in need of relaxation and service (at least not during their stay in Sreekandamangalam), which promotes greatly their social and cultural sensitisation (as attested to mainly by the entries in the guest book, or “Family book“) and contributes to the minimisation of socio-cultural damage.

**Contest Criterion:****Application of new methods in qualifying partnership and co-operation between the external tourism industry and the local people**

- Thus far, the only partner from the “external tourism industry“ is Waschbär-Reisen, Germany. BASIS appropriately did not wish to take any risks during the development and acceptance phase of the project and was not disappointed by Waschbär-Reisen: Apparently, the main clients of the travel agency are sensitive tourists. Under this condition, BASIS is also prepared to welcome groups from other travel operators. Individual tourists are only accepted if they are already known in a positive sense (have either been in the project before, are recommended from the Förderkreis in Gießen, etc.).
- After the completion of every group tour, BASIS sends a report to Waschbär-Reisen with information about the progress of the trip, any difficulties, etc. to enable Waschbär-Reisen to use the information in its customer counselling services.
- No local tour operators operate between Waschbär-Reisen and BASIS INTERNATIONAL, the “ownership“ of the sector is entirely with the project. Of the 45 Euro per tourist per day about 70 percent flow into the project and village development: accommodations, salaries, profit. The rest must be used for travel expenses, admission tickets and taxes.
- The idea of integrating this relatively small tourism sector into the large and complex village development project helps bridge the gap between travellers and hosts and to transform the servant/master relationships into a more partnership-oriented coexistence and community.
- BASIS already practices a kind of “project tourism“ jointly with Waschbär-Reisen (tourists) and the Carl Duisberg Gesellschaft (ASA-Scholarship recipients). The Public Private Partnership (PPP) Programme of BMZ (German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development) and GTZ (German Technical Cooperation) could derive great benefits from the experiences gathered in Sreekandamangalam.

**Contest Criterion:****Creation of other favourable conditions for a socially responsible tourism development in destination areas.**

- As “ambassadors between the cultures“ the Moozhiyil family invests considerable amounts of their energy for the advancement of socially responsible tourism through written correspondence and maintaining contacts with journalists and television teams (two reports have already been shown on television [WDR, Germany]).
- With the help of the full-time travel guide (Mr. Johnny) a branch/replication/copy of BASIS INTERNATIONAL is being developed in order to raise the importance and dynamism of socially responsible tourism in the region and ensure the continued existence of the project, should the Moozhiyil family be unable to continue it with the same energy.
- The connections to government tourism offices are still weak, but BASIS INTERNATIONAL is eager to contribute its expertise in the development of tourism master plans for the coastal, backwater and mountainous regions.

**Contest Criterion:**

**The projects and measures entered into the contest must be in line with the principles of environmental compatibility.**

- The entire project is directed to the restoration of the ecological balance and its maintenance. This is exemplified through the active practice of mixed cropping on the compound and the promotion of the entire range - from cultivating through processing and sales in the local community as well as throughout the region.
- The project places great emphasis on energy savings through the use of special lamps, solar electricity for the Ayurvedic clinic, scrap wood and biogas for cooking and through replacing ventilators through the use of room cooling construction methods.
- Waste is separated and valuable materials are sold. Oils (from the Ayurvedic clinic), soap water, and toilet water are collected and treated in different containers.
- Only natural materials are used for laundering sheets, curtains, etc.
- With the exception of a few products which must be additionally purchased the meals come from the cycle economy of the compound.

## **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The overall project has meanwhile reached a size and complexity, which urgently require not only reliance on the memory of the Moozhiyil family and their staff, but also the introduction of a monitoring and evaluation system (perhaps with the help of a competent ASA scholarship recipient) for systematic observation of the performance of project components, evaluation of their impact, and documentation of both. Otherwise, there is a danger of excessive focusing on certain knowledge carriers, dissipation of energy and oversights, particularly of unplanned effects of measures - all this would be detrimental to a continually participatory planning system.

The almost unmanageable size of the overall project, which is to be additionally expanded through further planned measures, renders it advisable to make increasing use of the services of local government and non-government institutions, and to promote and strengthen them. Thus, the project could be transferred as a functional, spatial, economic and time-limited bundle of measures into a programme in co-operation with local partners, which would also contribute to its sustainability.

A sensible increase in tourist numbers is to be desired in order to gradually get away from the support of the Förderkreis association. The view of Anisha Schubert (1999, p. 19) meets with full agreement from us: "Whilst the co-operation with Förderkeis Indienhilfe e.V. is indeed positive and built on a friendly foundation, there is still dependency, lack of equilibrium, the compulsion to account for expenses, formal requests, etc. to get the support. The step toward independence through tourism and production, or, in other words, toward financing through active performance, has led to greater desire to take on responsibility and increased work performance among male and female staff than in the case of financing through donations."

The staff should be provided with written employment contracts. That would prevent any feelings of uncertainty and dependency. Presentation of a written document with contractually formulated description of the job duties and regulations of the employment relationship is useful in case of changing over to a new employer.

The programme could be enriched by the addition of hiking routes, particularly in the Western Ghats. Trekking is work-intensive and yields a relatively high income spread. Moreover, it promotes a meditative encounter with oneself and the environment.

The encounter between the cultures as one of the main aims of the project should not be limited to German holiday travellers alone. If possible, the project should be provided with the necessary support for identification of appropriate partners from the external tourism industry outside Germany.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

The initiators and actors of the BASIS Project have succeeded in formulating the goals for an integrated village development project based on a holistic problem analysis and to implement it in stages. The embedding of BASIS INTERNATIONAL into the village development project is to the benefit of both the project and the tourists: the village residents benefit from the positive economic, social and cultural impact of tourism and tourists can gain diverse and profound insights into the living circumstances of the local people. The goals and concept of the BASIS Projects are to be commended to the fullest. To aid in the implementation, certain instruments should be introduced or improved: the development of a participatory monitoring and evaluation system, increased involvement by government and non-government institutions/organisations and the expansion of BASIS INTERNATIONAL and BASIS Handproducts. with a view to freeing the project from its dependence on donated funds.