



27th TO DO Award Ceremony

**9th March 2022, 02:30 pm
virtual ITB Convention**

TO DO Award 2022 – Contest Socially Responsible Tourism

At ITB Berlin, the Institute for Tourism and Development (Studienkreis für Tourismus und Entwicklung e.V.) will present the winner of the TO DO Award 2022 – International Contest Socially Responsible Tourism. The winner of the 27th contest edition from India involves in an exemplary manner, the local population in sustainable forms of tourism, creates alternative sources of income and strengthens people's self-confidence in their own cultures and traditions.

TO DO Award Human Rights in Tourism

For the sixth time, the Institute for Tourism and Development (Studienkreis für Tourismus und Entwicklung e.V.), in cooperation with the Roundtable Human Rights in Tourism and Studiosus Reisen Munich, also awards the TO DO Award Human Rights in Tourism.

TO DO AWARD

INDIA: Himalayan Ecotourism

www.himalayanecotourism.com



The Great Himalayan National Park (GHNP) is situated in the Indian state of Himachal Pradesh. Founded in 1984 to protect its rich flora and fauna, the national park was declared a World Natural Heritage site by UNESCO in 2014. This was a great success for conservationists. The local villagers, however, lost their options of using the forest, which led to heavy losses. When trekking tourism started, it could have compensated for the income opportunities lost.

However, the guides' and porters' wages were extremely low. In order to participate in tourism and obtain higher wages, a group of 65 members launched a local cooperative, but tour operators refused to contract the members.



To be able to organise treks with members of the cooperative, Stephan Marchal from Belgium founded the company Himalayan Ecotourism (HET). The wages are fixed by the cooperative in line with the members' demands and market rates. About 80 percent of the income from HET is paid out as wages or is retained by the cooperative as reserves.

In addition, HET projects for women, e.g. the production, sale and dispatch of apricot soap and oil, contributed to increasing family incomes in the region. More and more members are starting to set up homestay accommodation. In this way, a significant part of the income from tourism benefits the local population.

Their work has been very successful, with almost every family benefiting from higher incomes (until the Covid-19 pandemic). This has made the community proud and has boosted their commitment. They also agreed to launch a reforestation project. HET is a social enterprise. In the medium term, after successful training on the job, local people are expected to take over.

There are no settlements, huts, markers or paths within the national park, just trekking paths at most. In this wilderness devoid of inhabitants, at an elevation of more than 4,000 metres visitors may enjoy extraordinary experiences of nature, provided that they are accompanied by guides, and porters are also needed. HET also provides high-quality equipment, which illustrates that the 'eco' in the name is relevant. "Ecotourism also includes resource conservation and sustainability. To us, 'eco' means more than just nature treks", says Stephan Marchal.

AGUICAT was founded in 2016 as an association to defend the interests of licensed tourist guides in Catalonia. The license is given by the Catalan government to exercise the profession legally, showing protected heritage sites. A threat to liberalize the profession in 2016 was the starting point of the association.

Over the past 6 years, AGUICAT, which currently has approximately 400 members, has been fighting on different levels to improve the working conditions of guides, especially the licensed ones.

The association's key values are responsible and quality tourism.

In that sense, AGUICAT works to convince local authorities to reduce group sizes and minimize acoustic pollution by making it

obligatory to use whisper sets for certain group sizes. Both measures aim at ensuring a good coexistence with the residents of the city, guaranteeing more decent working conditions for the guides and improving the experience of the visitors. Moreover AGUICAT collaborates with local authorities and stakeholders to improve mobility and thus reduce contamination. They try to help authorities to find more sustainable ways of managing tourism, which has become a challenge in Barcelona, since before the pandemic arrived, Barcelona really suffered from overtourism.

Reinforcing a positive image of the guiding profession and creating awareness of the working conditions of licensed and non-licensed guides in Catalonia is an important issue just as promoting an ethical way of working through a binding Code of Conduct. By offering about 30 training activities for its members each year, AGUICAT promotes continuous training of licensed guides. Through leisure activities, the association builds links between member guides to promote collaboration, the sharing of knowledge and savoir-faire to ensure a high quality of guided tours. Last but not least AGUICAT contributes to social events such as fundraisers by offering guided tours to local citizens and vulnerable population.



Jury Members 2022

Dr. Christian Adler, Ethologist

Klaus Betz, Freelance Journalist

Prof. Dr. Ludwig Ellenberg, Consultant

Laura Jäger, Consultant

Rika Jean-Francois, ITB Corporate Social Responsibility

Antje Monshausen, Bread for the World/Tourism Watch

Dr. Dietmar Quist, Consultant

Hans Ulrich Schudel, Swiss Foundation for Solidarity in Tourism (SST)

Petra Thomas, forum anders reisen

Prof. Dr. Harald Zeiss, Harz University of Applied Sciences

Award Ceremony

Keynote

Rika Jean-Francois, ITB Corporate Social Responsibility

Award Winners

TO DO Award

Stephan Marchal,

Himalayan Ecotourism, India

TO DO Award Human Rights in Tourism

Macarena Bergada,

AGUICAT, Spain

supported by

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Schweizerische Stiftung für Solidarität im Tourismus
Swiss Foundation for Solidarity in Tourism

Application for the TO DO Award 2023 are available: www.todo-award.org and Facebook

Contact

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