

Tourism Impact on Local Livelihoods in Binsar, Uttarakhand, in the Indian Himalaya

Village Ways and the village enterprises with which they work in Binsar have collected data on the spend by Village Ways in the six villages through which their tourists walk in Binsar. [www.villageways.com/india-himalayas-binsar-sanctuary/india-himalayas-binsar-sanctuary]

In Binsar 58% of households are defined by the government as living below the poverty line (BPL), 81% of families and 20% of individuals are involved with Village Ways, these additional benefits are well spread across the communities. This spread is deliberate. It is important that the benefits from engaging with tourism are equitably spread and that this is seen as additional income, no other employment or livelihood options have been displaced by tourism. Village Ways generates a significant proportion of Binsar's income, although this varies between 31% in Satiri and 14% in Matkanya. Significant but not sufficient to create dependency nor to encourage households to abandon, neglect or reduce their other livelihood activities.

Village Ways are continuing to collect data and we are working with them to put the collection of livelihood impact data into their management accounts, and those of the Village Tourism Enterprises with who they work and next 2014/15 we shall be able to publish more railed data to household level. .

Info graphics

Indian Rupees <http://haroldgoodwin.info/uploads/LED/BinsarOverview2013%2714INR.pdf>

US Dollars <http://haroldgoodwin.info/uploads/LED/BinsarOverview2013%2714USD.pdf>

How the data was collected

All families were given a code and each family member a number - this allowed the data to be anonymous. In villages where Village Ways operates all families were ask whether they were registered with the Indian Government as Above the Poverty Line (APL) or Below the Poverty Line (BPL) and what their main sources of income were and the estimated annual value. This was important for Village Ways to be able to prioritise employment in the BPL families. Village Ways also tries to spread the economic impact across the village by ensure a member of each family is involved.

The data collected from the Village Ways employees was more specific including the job role and exact income including income from the Trust and tips. Other impacts monitored were economic divide between caste and gender. Date of birth was collected to ensure no under sixteens were hired and the date the family moved to the village to ensure that families were not moving into the village to become reliant on the tourism created.

What next?

Next year the data collected will include the number of days worked and if applicable the number of pieces produced. This will allow monitoring of the daily wage to ensure a fair living wage is being paid.

For more information email harold@haroldgoodwin.info

Notes for Editors

JUSTreport presents a simple to use scheme to help small businesses monitor, improve and publish their social, economic and environmental impacts. It was developed specifically for the travel and tourism industry and encourages transparency of information in a customer-friendly format. The JUSTreport ethos is to take the fear out of reporting and instead, work together to champion the importance of sustainability within the tourism industry, creating a community of businesses who are committed to making a change - and a difference.

www.linkedin.com/company/justreport

The Responsible Tourism Partnership works to support the development of responsible tourism businesses and initiatives by developing partnerships between tourism stakeholders in originating markets and destinations to use tourism to make “better places for people to live in and better places for people to visit.” The Partnership is the rights holder for the International Conferences on Responsible Tourism in Destinations and the publisher of RTNews.

<http://responsibletourismpartnership.org>

Village Ways

Village Ways, founded in 2006, is a social enterprise focused on developing responsible tourism in partnership with poorer rural communities, in order to sustain village life and culture, improve livelihoods in remote rural areas and reduce the need for outward migration. Village Ways seeks to create self-reliant local Village Tourism Enterprises (VTEs), each of which is sufficiently profitable to benefit the wider community by creating additional sources of community, household and individual income.

Fundamental to Village Ways are the principles that good businesses, to be sustainable, must be profitable for all partners. Our approach requires that all business units are profitable from the grass roots up, we ensure this by providing a targeted route to market, offering travel experiences with a true essence of people and places, which satisfies the innate longing that we all have for ‘authentic’ experiences.

Village Ways Partnership was developed by the Founders to ensure that village communities benefit from tourism by gaining income supplementary to their existing and traditional income sources. Village Ways Partnership harnesses international and domestic markets to bring tourists to the VTEs to ensure their commercial viability.

1. Village Ways ensures that the income generated from tourism through the Partnership adds to local income streams but does not replace traditional rural livelihoods.
2. Village Ways seeks to work with local communities through tourism to provide enhanced livelihoods balanced with the imperative to conserve their culture, environment and wildlife.
3. Village Ways works with the tourism industry to create a flow of guests, who are able to interact with communities and learn about each other’s lives through authentic experiences.
4. One of the Village Ways Partnership’s core values is respect. We expect guests to travel with respect as we respect each of the village partners with whom we work, recognising that we should all celebrate and encourage the maintenance of diversity.

Village Ways offers great experiences for guests passing through the landscape, encountering rural life and staying in rural guesthouses across India, Ethiopia and beyond. The beneficiaries are local communities and their guests. These holidays are offered through our own India-based Village Ways Travel and by partner travel companies from various countries. |

www.villageways.com/about-us/about-us