

Responsible Tourism Policy

Phu Phiang and Fair Trade...the history

Phu Phiang team stems from a long history of promoting fair trade. Our founder, Rosalind Kulmanochwong, has been immersed in the fair trade ethos for more than 15 years, since the time that her parents helped to found ThaiCraft, a registered Fair Trade organization with IFAT – The International Fair Trade Association, which helps village artisans throughout the country achieve self-reliance by providing income-generating opportunities.

Phu Phiang emerged as an independent company when the customers and volunteers of ThaiCraft began requesting visits to producer villages. These individuals sought the chance to meet the people behind the products and learn about their culture. Since then, Phu Phiang has expanded to offer various responsible tours to remote village communities throughout Thailand; places tourists rarely stumble upon!

Our Commitment

Phu Phiang and ThaiCraft remain close partners. Both organizations work to preserve indigenous craft traditions, passed down from generation to generation. Phu Phiang however, has a special responsibility to bear. As a tour operator, Phu Phiang must ensure that the act of bringing tourists into small villages and remote areas does not disrupt the traditional way of life for the local people. In fact, the company must do everything in its power to ensure that a positive impact is made and that everyone is better off in the end. In order to ensure this, we commit to the following responsible tourism policy.

In general, we aim to adhere to the following principles:

- Create close partnerships with local communities, local guides and local entrepreneurs and businesses. Also providing training and support where appropriate.
- Ensure there is a mutual benefit for all involved in our activities and that fair prices, wages and compensation are always given as appropriate.
- Make a point of giving travellers an understanding, appreciation and respect for local cultures that will provide a positive impact on host communities.
- Take care that our activities involve an awareness and concern for the environment, including: the use of sustainable natural resources, keeping damage to a minimum and compensating for damaging effects, as much as possible.

Phu Phiang Co., Ltd.

More specifically, we meet these standards by doing the following:

Create close partnerships with local communities, local guides and local entrepreneurs and businesses.

- We use a variety of public and locally owned private transportation. These vehicles must be properly maintained and driven by safe, reliable drivers.
- At least one certified, English-speaking, local guide will accompany each group for the duration of the tour. When visiting communities, village representatives are our hosts. This empowers the villagers we visit and provides a more enriched experience for everyone.
- We partner with the villages we visit to ensure that their needs are being met and the effect of our tours is positive on their communities. We intend to further strengthen this relationship by integrating the communities we visit into the Phu Phiang planning process more fully.
- Whenever possible and appropriate we stay in locally-owned accommodations and eat at locally owned restaurants. These establishments range from very simple (homestay and eating with the family) to well appointed (hotels and well-known restaurants). Where possible, we use establishments that are owned by and/or contribute to community development programs. Our itineraries and/or guides will indicate when this is the case.
- We take part in development initiatives that strive to improve community-based tourism in Thailand whenever possible. These must involve input from all stakeholders and especially the communities and villages we visit.
- We partner with a variety of groups and organizations who are working to change for the better the way the tourism industry operates in Thailand and internationally. We hope that together, this network of concerned stakeholders will make a positive impact on tourism.

Ensure there is a mutual benefit for all involved in our activities and that fair prices, wages and compensation are always given as appropriate.

- We commit to researching and understanding as much as possible about the business practices of all our partners. We wish to work with those organizations and individuals (both locally and overseas) who adhere to ethical and fair trade principles as much as possible.
- We give the producer groups fair compensation for their time and effort in hosting our visits.
- We commit to paying our employees a fair wage and benefits for the work they do, offering equal opportunities to all employees, and ensuring that a safe and healthy environment is provided.

Make a point of giving travelers an understanding and appreciation for local cultures that will provide a positive impact on host communities.

- We inform our foreign agents about the local situation in Thailand as much as possible prior to a tour departing so that they may, in turn, inform the travelers. This includes information about the political situation, climate, environment, cultural expectations and language.
- We provide a travel code of conduct for tourists to review prior to their arrival.
- We inform and educate our guests during the tour to ensure that the travel experience is positive for all involved.

Take care that our activities involve only a sustainable use of natural resources, keeping damage to the environment and ecosystem to a minimum.

- We minimize any negative impact on resources and the natural environment, and encourage recycling or reducing waste wherever possible.
- We support and visit projects linked to environmental issues where appropriate
- We inform travelers about the local environment as much as possible so that they may understand the unique eco-systems of the places they visit
- We respect local culture and traditions in as far as they are environmentally appropriate.

Phu Phiang values respect, learning, making friends, and having fun above all else. We constantly strive for improvement in all aspects of our work, including the above fair trade tourism policy. We will implement changes as necessary to this policy to ensure our goal of fair trade tourism is constantly being met and our impact is regularly evolving and improving.