

Community Homestay Network (CHN) Responsible Tourism Policy

At CHN, we are committed to fostering responsible and sustainable tourism that empowers local communities, preserves cultural heritage, and protects the environment. Our responsible tourism policy is rooted in ethical practices, inclusivity, and long-term sustainability, ensuring that tourism remains a force for positive impact. Below are our core commitments:

1. Environmental Responsibility at CHN

As a sister concern of Royal Mountain Travel, CHN is deeply committed to environmental stewardship, embedding sustainability into both policy and practice. We recognize the vital role tourism plays in environmental conservation and proactively work to minimize its negative impacts. Our approach emphasizes collaboration, innovation, and grassroots action to protect nature and strengthen climate resilience through tourism.

Our Key Commitments:

a. Support for Sustainable Tourism Practices

CHN is committed to promoting homestays and tourism experiences that prioritize sustainability. We support the empowerment of our partner communities by ensuring that tourism development aligns with the protection of natural ecosystems and the preservation of cultural and local heritage.

b. Waste Reduction and Adoption of Eco-Friendly Practices

CHN encourages all partner communities to implement waste minimization strategies, responsible waste disposal, and the use of environmentally friendly alternatives. This includes the segregation of waste, reduction of single-use plastics, and promotion of sustainable consumption and production practices in

2. Low-Impact Travel & Resource Efficiency

i. Carbon Management and Green Mobility

CHN is committed to reducing carbon emissions through the promotion of low-impact transportation solutions. In collaboration with Royal Mountain Group, we prioritize the integration of electric vehicles into our operational fleet and actively encourage our partner communities and service providers to adopt similar low-emission mobility options wherever feasible.

ii. Energy Efficiency

CHN supports the transition to renewable energy sources within community homestays and associated tourism infrastructure. This includes the adoption of solar water heating systems and other



energy-efficient technologies to reduce environmental impact and promote sustainable energy use across our network.

3. Cultural Sensitivity and Heritage Preservation

CHN is committed to ensuring that tourism activities respect, celebrate, and strengthen local cultures while fostering meaningful and authentic experiences for travelers. Our cultural preservation approach includes the following measures:

- Partnering exclusively with community-based homestay groups rather than individual providers to ensure collective community ownership and equitable benefit-sharing.
- Engaging local artisans and multi-generational craft communities in tourism value chains to safeguard traditional craftsmanship and prevent the dilution of cultural heritage by mass-produced alternatives.
- Prioritizing locally owned boutique hotels and accommodations for traveler stays and events to support the local economy and maintain cultural integrity.
- Promoting respectful traveler engagement with local customs, traditions, and social norms by encouraging cultural sensitivity and appropriate behavior.
- Providing clear communication and social media guidelines, particularly during familiarization (FAM) trips to raise awareness among journalists, content creators, and travel agents about ethical storytelling and responsible representation of host communities.
- Supporting the continuity of local storytelling, oral histories, and traditional practices through community-led tourism initiatives that center cultural pride and intergenerational knowledge-sharing.

4. Child Protection Policy

The safety and well-being of children in our partner communities are of utmost importance. CHN enforces strict child protection guidelines, including:

- **Child Protection and Ethical Engagement**
CHN maintains a zero-tolerance policy toward the exploitation of children in any form of tourism-related activity. We are committed to safeguarding children's rights, well-being, and access to education by ensuring they are not involved in commercial tourism experiences that could harm their development.
- To uphold this commitment, CHN integrates child protection principles into its community training programs, providing guidance on appropriate and ethical engagement with children in homestay

and tourism settings. Additionally, we educate both travelers and hosts on responsible behavior, emphasizing respectful, non-exploitative interactions that prioritize the safety and dignity of children.

5. Gender Equity and Inclusion Participation

As an organization that works with **900 women entrepreneurs across Nepal** (as of 2024), CHN is dedicated to fostering gender equality and social inclusion. CHN is committed to promoting gender equality and inclusive participation in community tourism. Our approach ensures that women, youth, minorities, and other underrepresented groups have equitable opportunities to benefit from tourism. Key measures include:

- Ensuring that women-led tourism initiatives have fair access to capacity-building programs, financial resources, and meaningful participation in decision-making processes.
- Supporting the creation of flexible, home-based tourism work opportunities that allow women to engage in income-generating activities without needing to leave their households.
- Designing and delivering training programs in close consultation with local communities to ensure they are contextually relevant, accessible, and inclusive.
- Promoting tourism as a pathway for economic empowerment and leadership development for youth, minority communities, and marginalized groups.

6. Animal Welfare and Wildlife Protection

CHN maintains a strict policy against the exploitation of animals in tourism and is committed to promoting ethical and responsible wildlife experiences. Our policy framework includes the following provisions:

- Prohibiting any tourism activity that involves animal cruelty or exploitation, including but not limited to elephant rides and performances involving wild animals.
- Promoting awareness among community homestay hosts and travelers on the importance of ethical wildlife encounters that prioritize animal welfare and respect for natural behavior.
- Encouraging tourism practices that support the conservation of wildlife and protection of natural habitats.



- Providing training to local communities that includes guidance on animal welfare, wildlife protection, and the ethical integration of nature into tourism experiences.

7. Ethical Business and Sustainable Partnerships

We work with stakeholders who share our vision for responsible tourism. Our approach includes:

- CHN prioritizes strategic partnerships with locally owned businesses, community-led enterprises, and ethical tourism providers that demonstrate a strong commitment to social and environmental responsibility. This includes strict adherence to a zero-tolerance policy on child labor and the use of animals for entertainment.
- In alignment with our values, we also engage with global travel companies that prioritize people and purpose alongside profit, particularly those recognized as thought leaders in responsible tourism.
- Furthermore, CHN collaborates with impact-driven partners to enhance community resilience through tourism, fostering inclusive growth and long-term sustainability across the destinations we support.
- CHN has developed a comprehensive set of standards to ensure quality, accountability, and mutual respect within its network. All member homestays are required to comply with the Visitor Code of Conduct, Membership Criteria, Community Homestay Operational Guidelines, Membership Agreement, and Behavior Guidelines. These frameworks are integral to promoting professionalism, fostering positive interactions between travelers and host communities, and upholding the values of responsible and community-based tourism.

8. Crisis Response and Community Resilience

CHN is dedicated to strengthening the resilience of tourism-dependent communities by implementing proactive measures that support their long-term sustainability. Our commitment includes:

- Providing emergency context aware, learners' centric capacity-building training to help communities recover and adapt during times of crisis.
- Developing innovative tourism experiences and alternative income-generating opportunities to ensure continued community viability during periods of tourism decline.
- Maintaining flexible and adaptive policies that respond effectively to evolving socio-economic and environmental challenges, ensuring the continued growth and stability of our partner communities.

Conclusion

At CHN, responsible tourism is not just a principle, it is the foundation of our work. We strive to ensure that tourism benefits **local people, safeguards cultural heritage, the environment, and strengthens inclusivity**. Through ethical partnerships, strong community engagement, and sustainable practices, we are committed to shaping a tourism industry that is **just, responsible, and impactful for generations to come**.