



Global travel,
local experts

Impact Report

APRIL 2023 - MARCH 2024
IN REVIEW



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The importance of tourism

UN Secretary-General
Antonio Guterres



Tourism is one of the world's most important economic sectors. It employs **one in every ten people on Earth** and **provides livelihoods to hundreds of millions more.**

It boosts economies and enables countries to thrive. It allows people to experience some of the world's cultural and natural riches and brings people closer to each other, highlighting our common humanity.

Many tourism jobs are in the informal economy or in micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, **which employ a high proportion of women and young people.**

For women, rural communities, indigenous peoples and many other historically marginalized populations, tourism has been **a vehicle for integration, empowerment and generating income.**

Tourism is also a key pillar for the conservation of natural and cultural heritage.

It is imperative that we rebuild the tourism sector. But it must be in a way that is safe, equitable and climate friendly.

Supporting the millions of livelihoods that depend on tourism means building a sustainable and responsible travel experience that **creates positive outcomes for host communities, workers and travelers.**

[Find out more](#)

10%

OF THE WORLD'S
WORKERS ARE
IN THE TOURISM
INDUSTRY

>100
million

LIVELIHOODS
SUPPORTED

1/3

PROPORTION
OF DEVELOPING
ECONOMIES THAT
RELY ON IT

Introduction

From our earliest days of existence as a company, we wanted travel to be a force for good.

At its best we believe that's exactly what it is – a positive exchange between people, an opportunity to learn, and a way to build connections around the world. It also provides the economic/ financial flows which enables people to thrive and ecosystems to be protected in their natural state.

Travel can be many things – fun, interesting, relaxing, energizing, educative, dynamic, slow. But whichever combination of adjectives you choose - it should *always do good*.

In our first Impact Report we want to set out how we have acted on our vision for sustainable and ethical travel in the last year, including details of our key achievements and future plans.

Here you will find more information about our B Corp journey, the launch of our Fund For Good and our Travelife Partner status. And you can also find out how you can get involved and help us improve our impact next year, and beyond.



What we do & why

On the surface, TravelLocal is a holiday company – so far, so simple. When it comes to measuring impact, however, it's good to remember what we do, and why.

Our vision is to reimagine travel, to make it better for everyone involved, fairer and more sustainable.

We do that by connecting travelers directly to carefully selected trusted local travel experts living and working in each of our 90+ destinations, who really know and care for their country and its communities and ecosystems.

What we do & why

Fairer



Our local travel experts are the hidden stars of the international travel industry. The foundation of truly memorable trips is local knowledge, and by accessing their expertise directly through the TravelLocal platform you are supporting a vast array of entrepreneurial activity, increasing local employment and building deeper connections with the people who have created your trip, and are making sure it's amazing. Maximizing local employment is directly helpful to the economy of your destination – more money comes in, is spent locally, and sustains higher standards of living and improved services such as health and education.

Better



Could it also make for a better holiday to book it this way? Take a look at our reviews for the overwhelming evidence that it does. Our local travel experts are hand-picked for their destination knowledge and insights – they just know it far better than anyone else, and with TravelLocal you can cut through the “noise” of the internet to ask someone local, on the ground. Imagine the variety, depth and breadth of activities and experiences known to a local expert based in the destination you want to visit – we think it beats anything else available on the market today.

More sustainable



Traveling with our local travel experts is more sustainable – but why? Our local travel experts know their own countries so well they are best placed to protect them from overtourism, to direct you away from the crowds, to avoid unnecessary flying and to help you spend more time with the locals. The most destructive forms of mass tourism (large cruise ships, mega resorts) are not sold on the TravelLocal platform – and our local travel experts help us drive that change. At its simplest – knowledgeable local people, who are in contact with global travelers every day, are the best custodians of their own tourism assets.

Who we are

Our team is multinational, multi-disciplinary and passionate about what we do.

65

TRAVELLOCAL
EMPLOYEES

20+

DIFFERENT
NATIONALITIES

238

LOCAL TRAVEL
COMPANIES

600+

LOCAL TRAVEL EXPERTS
WHO LIVE AND WORK
IN THE DESTINATIONS

16k+

TRAVELLOCAL TRAVELERS IN
THE LAST YEAR, AND MORE
THAN 60 000 SINCE 2016.

140+

ORIGIN
COUNTRIES

90+

DESTINATIONS

4

GLOBAL CHARITIES
SUPPORTED:
[SUSTAINABLE AMAZON
FOUNDATION](#), [WILDLIFE
ALLIANCE](#), [JUST A DROP](#)
& [TREE AID](#)





Margaret Traveled to Poland, 2024

“Dominika created an outstanding travel itinerary that had local, knowledgeable guides, concerts, food tours, important sites. She shaped the trip to our taste and sent information in a timely way. Bob and I had personalized services with driver pickups and dropoffs at the airport and train stations. We visited key sites in Warsaw, Kraków, Auschwitz-Birkenau, and the Wieliczka Salt Mine. The local guides gave us an individual tour with in-depth descriptions of what we saw, its importance in Polish History and on request recommendations on places to eat and see in our free time. I highly recommend Dominka for arranging your travel itinerary in Poland. TravelLocal’s platform was easy to use. I loved the idea of giving the money directly to the local people doing all the work. It was my first time having an arranged trip with them and I would definitely do it again.”



Alison Traveled to Vietnam, 2024

“We were brilliantly supported by Thao and Ly throughout the planning and 24x7 on the trip, which was hugely reassuring so far from home. However, the trip worked so smoothly that little support was needed!

At every step we had people to meet us and show us some wonderful places and experiences slightly off the well beaten tourist track. The tour itself was brilliant, a perfect combination of activities. It was our first visit to both countries and while we only scratched the surface, we felt like we got a much better insight than if we had tried to plan it ourselves. I can highly recommend using TravelLocal to organize and take care of you on this trip. It was amazing! TravelLocal has a very smooth process, were very quick to respond, and the payment process was very easy. I had never used anything like this before, and now that I have used it, I wouldn’t hesitate to use it again.”



Malcolm Traveled to Turkey, 2024

“The trip Calgar suggested and designed for me was awesome. I got to do everything I wanted. His guides knew everything in each place I visited. They also provided their personal phone numbers after we had finished, just in case. And as a solo traveler this was awesome. Motels were in great locations. Staff were all very welcoming. The rooms were all of great quality and I wasn’t pushed into small rooms because I was a single person. I would highly recommend TravelLocal and Calgar to anyone looking for a holiday in Turkey.

This platform is excellent. All your communication can be read like it’s an SMS on your phone. I have actually booked another trip on TravelLocal for September.”

The year in review

B Corp

In March 2024 we were awarded B Corp certified status, with a qualifying score of 91.5 – exceeding not only the B Corp pass mark of 80 points, but also the travel industry average of 80.7 points.

1% Fund For Good

We distributed 1% of our revenue to four charities, chosen to match our ethical “pillars”:

- People & Society: **Sustainable Amazon Foundation (FAS)**
- Environmental Protection: **Just A Drop**
- Business As A Force For Good: **Tree Aid**
- Animal Protection: **Wildlife Alliance**

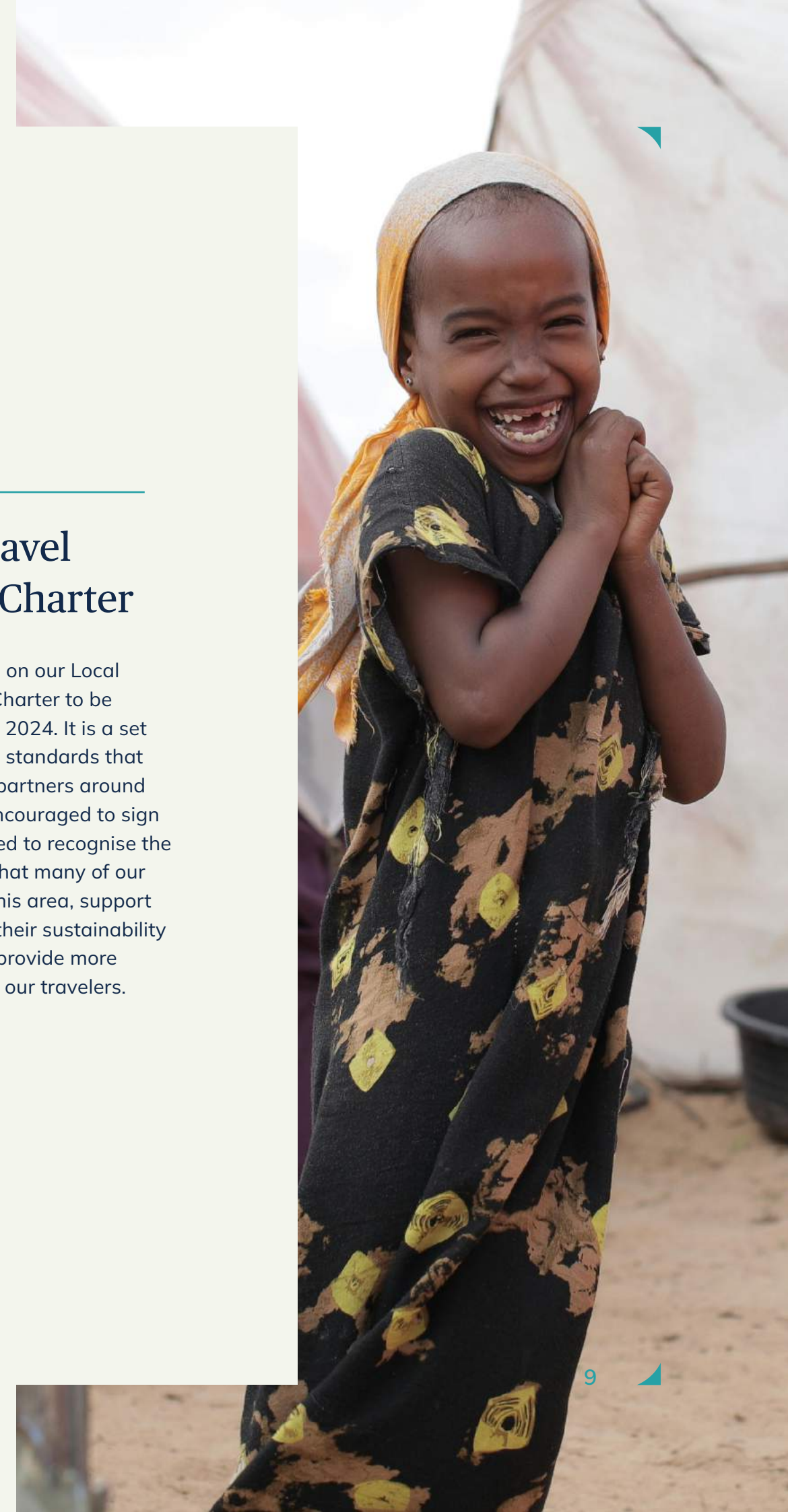
Travelife

TravelLocal is a Travelife Partner. Travelife is the most widely recognized sustainability accreditation for the travel industry. It consists of a set of sustainability standards, that we comply with and report on. Our next goal is to achieve Travelife Certified level in 2025.

Local Travel Partner Charter

We are working on our Local Travel Partner Charter to be launched in late 2024. It is a set of sustainability standards that our local travel partners around the world are encouraged to sign up to. We wanted to recognise the amazing work that many of our partners do in this area, support our partners in their sustainability journey, and to provide more transparency to our travelers.

NB: Our “impact year” runs from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024



The year in review

Emissions Measurement

We are founder signatories of the Glasgow Declaration, which commits us to reducing our emissions by 50% by 2030. We measure our carbon emissions annually - from what we can ascertain (most travel companies do not publish this information) they are relatively low by travel industry standards, at 2702 kg per employee (roughly the equivalent of one return long haul flight per year per employee).

Decarbonisation

As part of our decarbonisation efforts, our offices in Germany and the UK are powered by green energy. On top of that, our employees get second hand equipment as standard, and we have policies to prioritize train travel over other forms of transportation for business purposes.

Engagement

Each quarter, we invite a guest speaker to give a presentation to our team. In the last 12 months we have hosted talks covering decarbonising aviation, over tourism in Southern Europe, decolonising travel, and the positive financial impact on our destinations of traveling with local travel companies.

NB: Our "impact year" runs from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

B Corp

Earlier this year we achieved a longstanding goal – we became a certified B Corp. It was a team effort, and the culmination of a year of forensic scrutiny of our own business, trying to ensure we were living up to our values. For us, it's a key crucial step on a longer-term journey – to be a force for good in travel – and not an endpoint.

What is it? B Corp certification is verified by B Lab, the not-for-profit business behind the B Corp movement. The certification process is designed to look into every aspect of our operations to ensure the highest standards of social and environmental performance, transparency and accountability, alongside commitments that go beyond shareholder value. Before receiving a score, candidate companies are required to first complete an online B Impact Assessment (BIA) that encompasses more than 200 questions focused on governance, workers, environment, community, and customer relations.

Why is it important? B Corp is not for the faint of heart. It's as detailed and granular a certification process as we have seen anywhere and is still the gold standard certification scheme for companies trying to be about more than simply profit. We want it to be a signal to all existing and future TravelLocal customers, as well as to our team and our local travel partners, that together we can indeed "reimagine travel".

What next? B Corp certification lasts for three years, at which point we must recertify. Our aim is to continue to improve across the key categories, but particularly our social impact on our destinations.

“

We believe it's important to support and help local businesses and places, as they are the core of our very culture. To support these families and see the direct impact this has on their families and the education of their children is very rewarding for us.


Ensuring more money goes into the destination is key. So the best way to ensure you are getting the best local knowledge and your money is benefiting the local economy is to book with qualified and certified local companies in the destination itself.”



— Annelies
Hammerlinck,
Executive Director
at our local travel
partner in Peru

Our Fund For Good

Being a force for good in travel is intrinsic to our business model and ethos, but that cannot be the whole picture for any company wanting to make a positive impact in the world. That’s why, to maximize the good we do, we donate a portion of every TravelLocal booking to four charities around the world that align with our “pillars” - the categories within which we try to be a force for good - and that we hand-picked because of their impact:

OUR “PILLARS”		WHO WE SUPPORT
	People & Society The way our business helps the people and society of each of our destinations	Foundation For Amazon Sustainability
	Environmental Protection Ensuring a healthy environment for future generations	Just A Drop
	Animal Welfare Supporting efforts to protect vulnerable wildlife and animals worldwide	Wildlife Alliance
	Business As A Force For Good The good we can do that goes beyond travel, and beyond our destinations	Tree Aid

Opposite: Foundation For Amazon Sustainability



Our Fund For Good

Why these charities?

Our goal was to find charities whose ethos and values aligned with ours:

- Organizations that work in collaboration and partnership with beneficiary countries and communities
- Charities with a clear tangible impact
- NGOs with high governance standards and transparency, that communicate clearly

Opposite:

Wildlife Alliance, Tree Aid

How much are we giving?

Each year, we give an equal share of 1% of all the commission we earn worldwide to these organizations. Over the coming years, our wish is to broaden our charitable support within each pillar, to maximize the effect of the donation and to reflect our globally-minded ethos.



Our Fund For Good

“

The support Just a Drop receives from TravelLocal is amazing, it means the world to us.

TravelLocal help us develop our safe water programme, so we can start working in a new country, Tanzania, in the next few months. Our menstrual hygiene programme helps girls stay in school and get a better, dignified education and the good news is, thanks to TravelLocal we're able to start this vital work in Cambodia. We're really very happy about this and send thanks from the whole Just a Drop team”.



— Brendan Hanlon,
Just A Drop

“

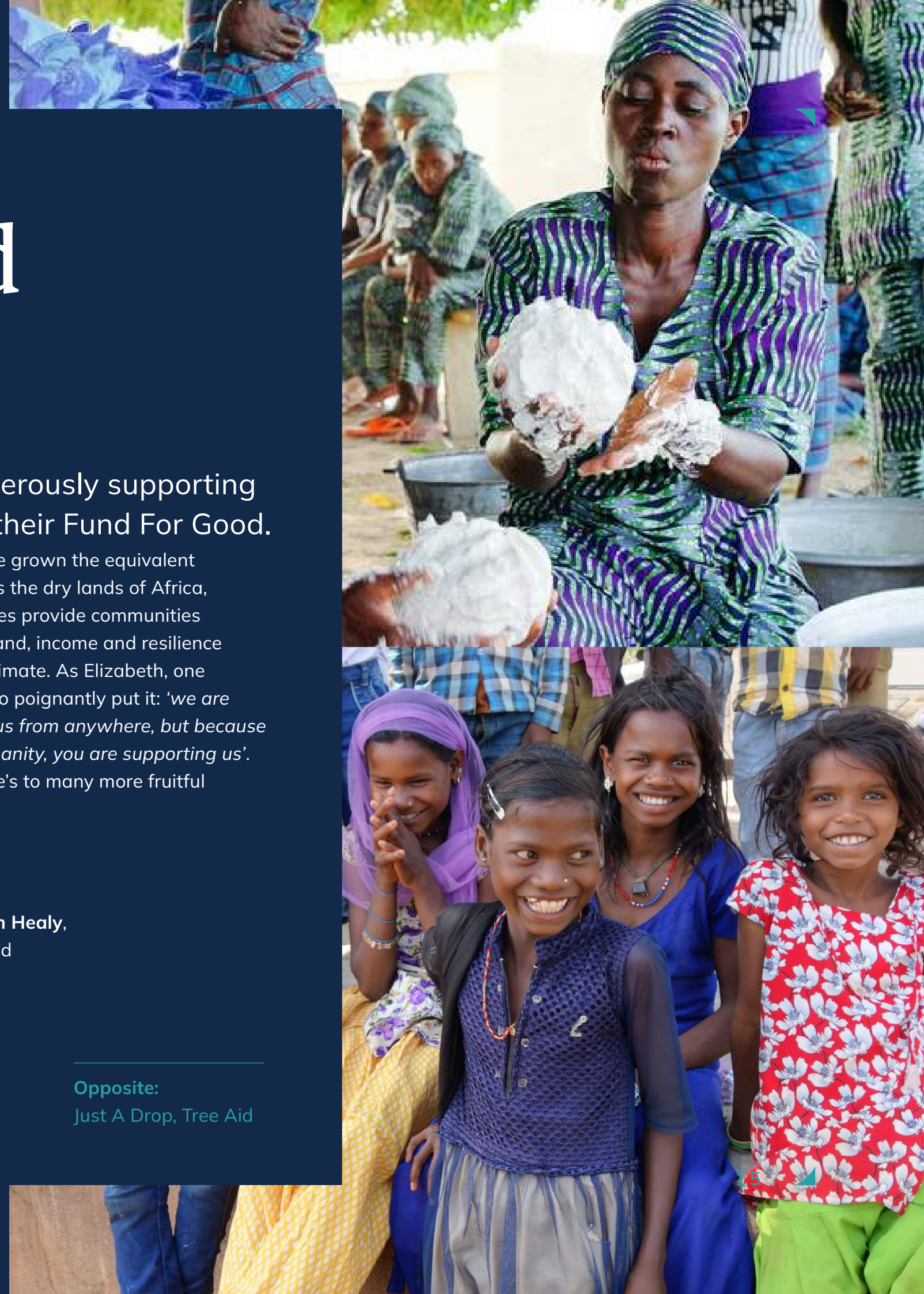
TravelLocal is generously supporting Tree Aid through their Fund For Good.

Already their donations have grown the equivalent of 1,475 trees with us across the dry lands of Africa, which is amazing! These trees provide communities with nutritious food, fertile land, income and resilience against an ever-changing climate. As Elizabeth, one of our project participants, so poignantly put it: *‘we are aware that you don't know us from anywhere, but because of the love you have for humanity, you are supporting us’*. Thank you TravelLocal - here's to many more fruitful years in partnership!”



— Beth Healy,
Tree Aid

Opposite:
Just A Drop, Tree Aid



Our Fund For Good

“

As a travel company TravelLocal is well aware of the abusive treatment towards wild animals

that takes place all over the world, and it is gratifying to know that the company takes its responsibility towards the environment seriously. TravelLocal is now partnering with Wildlife Alliance and gives financial support to help us care for the wild animals at Phnom Tamao that we have rescued from the illegal wildlife trade, which usually numbers around 1,600 individual animals, depending on new arrivals and releases. It is no exaggeration to say that this is life- saving support, for all of these animals would be dead without our intervention and TravelLocal's support. Thank you so much from everyone at Wildlife Alliance and from our animals at Phnom Tamao!!”



— Nick Marx,
Wildlife Alliance

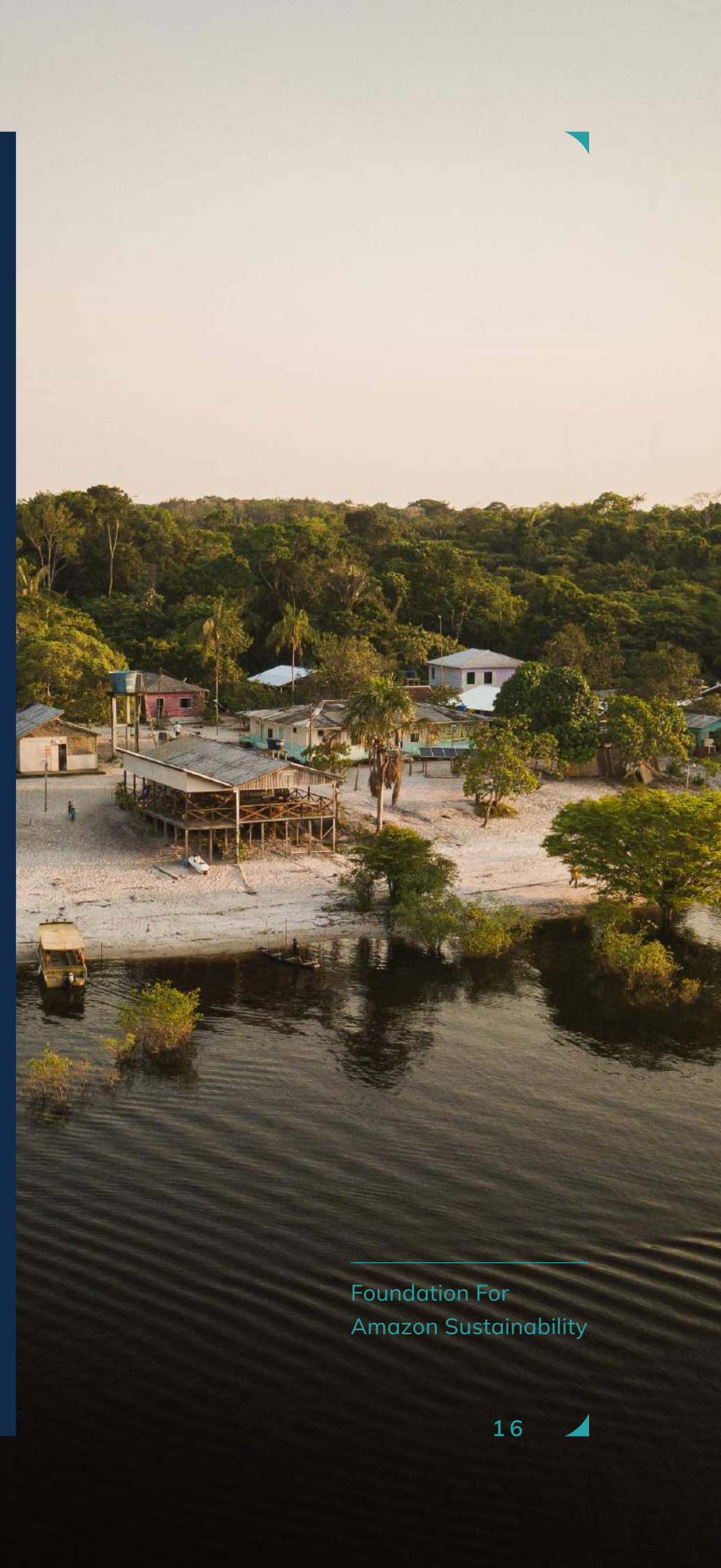
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The support provided by TravelLocal has helped to bring health care to remote regions of the Amazon.

The funds have been used to subsidize part of the human resources working in the Forest Health Program, but above all, they have made it possible to provide psychological care in communities located in Environmental Conservation Units. In 2 months, 24 psychological calls were made, covering 7 communities belonging to 5 municipalities in the interior of the state of Amazonas. In addition to the consultations with the community members, the professionals have given tele-orientations to the health professionals, the Community Health Agents (ACS), instructing them in the active search for the community members. We are very happy with the results of this partnership and hope it will continue. We would like to thank TravelLocal for helping FAS to take care of those who take care of the Forest!



— Mickela Souza,
Foundation For Amazon
Sustainability



Foundation For
Amazon Sustainability

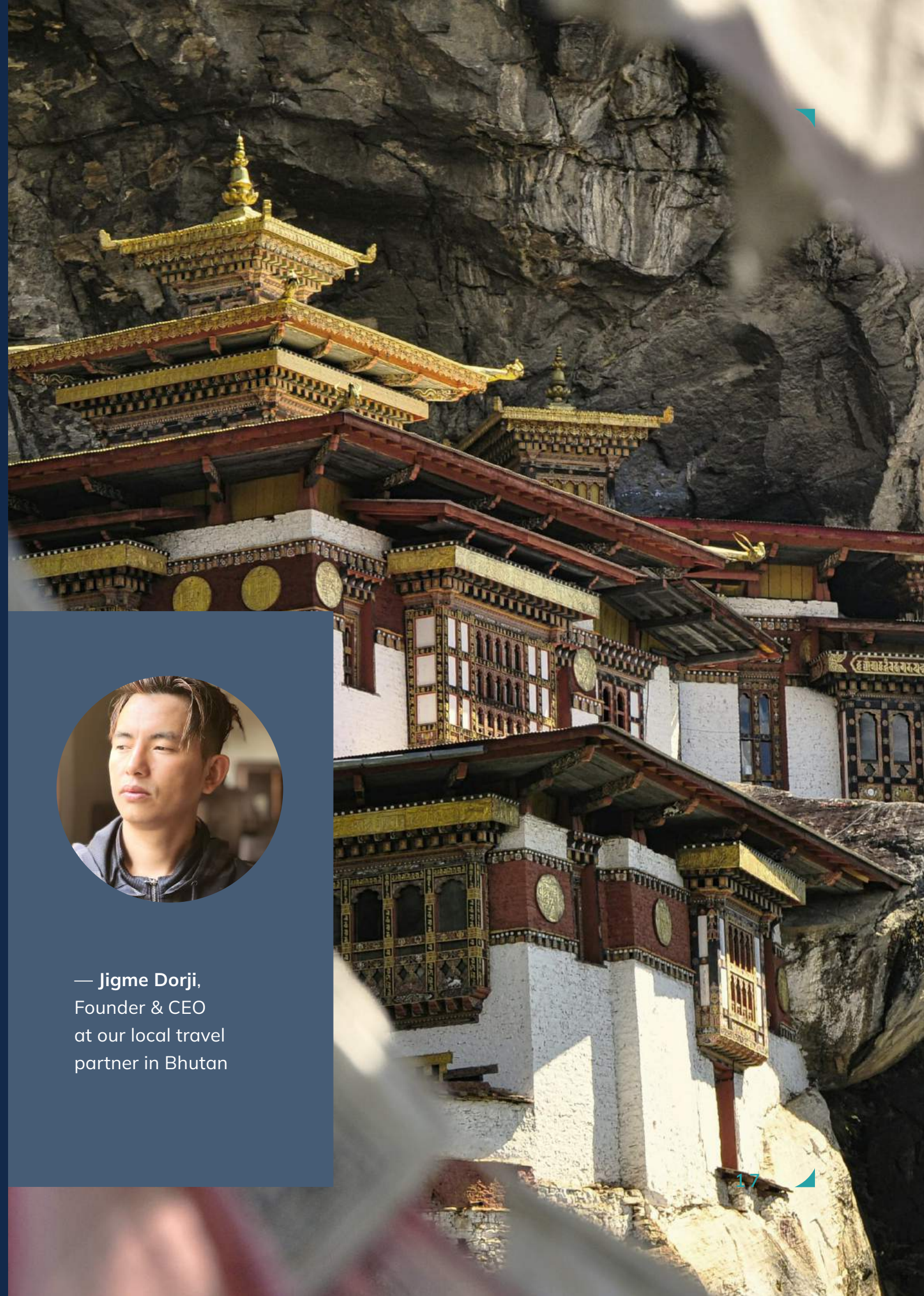
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We have been very fortunate to be working with TravelLocal and bringing in foreign currency for the country, which is essential for providing basic facilities to its citizens.

The more travelers venture into Bhutan for vacations, the more stable the country can be in terms of foreign currency reserves.”



— Jigme Dorji,
Founder & CEO
at our local travel
partner in Bhutan





Arieyeh Traveled to Greece, 2024

"TravelLocal truly made our trip to Greece unforgettable! Their exceptional familiarity with the area added a special touch to our journey. From recommending the best guides to providing us with personalized insights, their attention to detail was outstanding. The team was not only professional but also incredibly friendly, making us feel right at home. We are grateful for their expertise and genuine care in ensuring we had a wonderful experience exploring Greece. Highly recommend them for anyone looking to have a memorable and hassle-free travel experience!"



Chris Traveled to China, 2024

"TravelLocal is a fantastic choice! Their local experts put together a fantastic itinerary for us, were open to ideas, suggestions, and had answers to all our questions. Really happy with their services."



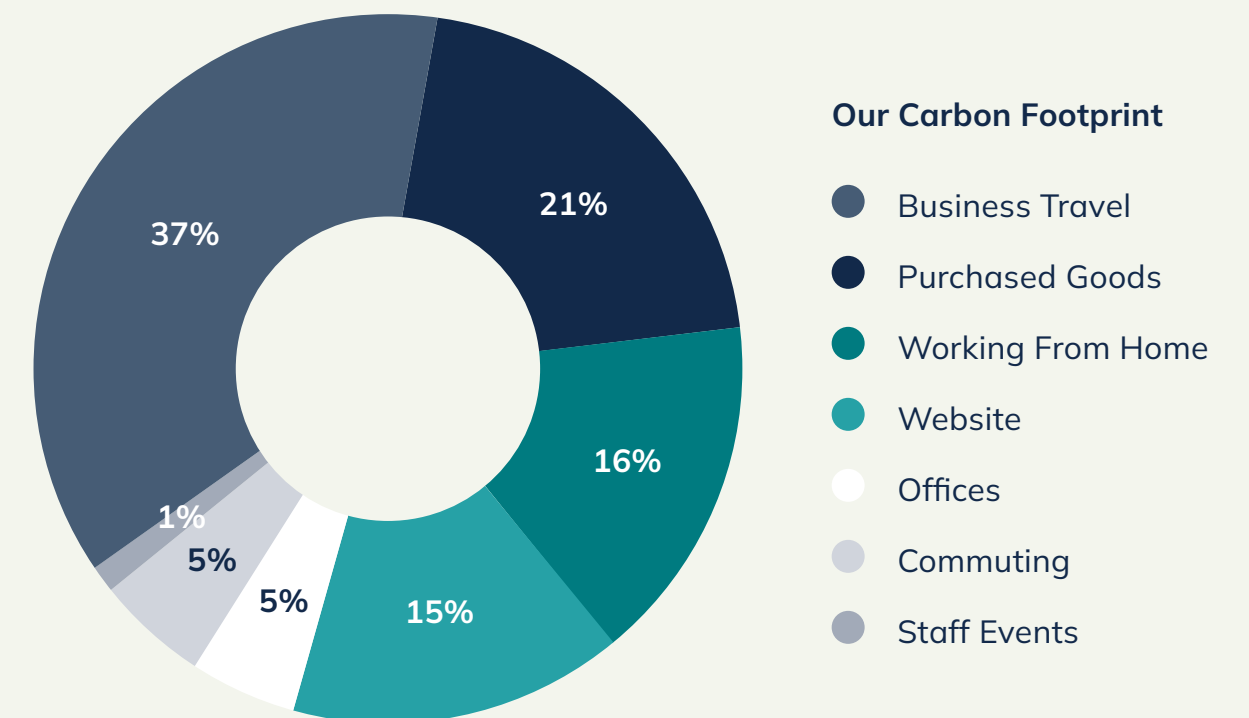
Lynda Jean Traveled to Indonesia, 2024

"Their team were informative, friendly and understood our wants/needs. Taylor, our local expert, made our trip and was flexible with dates and activities to fit our plans. At all times, they were great at communication and kept us up to date. I'd highly recommended TravelLocal for the following reasons: easy to use, informative, met our requirements, and the service from the local agents exceeded our expectations."

Our carbon emissions measurement & decarb

In the last year, for the first time, we measured our carbon footprint as a business, in order to establish a baseline from which we could decarbonise. It was an illuminating process with some surprises along the way.

You can see our emissions breakdown opposite:



In 2022-23, our HQ emissions were **76,459 kg of CO₂e**. This is our baseline year. The baseline year is first year we started measuring our footprint and the year we compare progress against.

Our carbon emissions measurement & decarb

What we learned

- Our per capita emissions (equivalent to one return long haul flight per employee per year) are relatively low already, though there is much to do over the coming years.
- The internationally agreed emissions “scopes” do not currently account for the holidays bought and sold through TravelLocal.
- We had thought that being a remote-first team, with far less commuting, might mean a low emissions profile. However, any gains here were offset by the Working From home category, because heating our individual homes is less carbon efficient than all working from an office.
- We knew our hardware (“Purchased Goods”) would be a noteworthy source of carbon emissions, but the eventual percentage was quite high.

What we are changing

- We have defined our own “Scope 4” to encompass the emissions of all TravelLocal holidays. And we will be concentrating more of our future decarbonisation efforts on reducing them.
- We are working to incentivise our team to switch to green energy suppliers at home, to lower the working from home emissions profile.
- We now have a buying policy on purchased goods that favors second-hand hardware in almost all cases.

With thanks to Ecollective

Zero in on... Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions



“

When travelers choose to book with us, they're not just gaining access to unparalleled local knowledge; they're actively contributing to the growth and sustainability of Greece's economy.

Supporting local entrepreneurs isn't just a belief; it's a practice that yields tangible economic benefits, from fostering increased local employment opportunities to nurturing the long-term development of our communities.

Through our continued partnership with TravelLocal, we're dedicated to championing responsible travel practices that not only enrich the experiences of our travelers but also contribute positively to the cultural and economic fabric of our country.”



— **Antonis Alexandrou**,
Founder & CEO
at our local travel
partner in Greece

Economic impact

Sponsoring the documentary “Hidden In Plain Sight”

In a similar vein, this year we have sponsored an award-winning short film called “Hidden In Plain Sight”, made by the American videographer Rachel Levy. The film documents the subject of “economic leakage” – how much money from travelers goes into the destination economy, and the inequities of its distribution in the country – specifically with regards to the Tanzanian safari industry. The film will air on PBS in America this summer, and we will share the public weblink once it has broadcast.

[Find out more](#)

Our work with The Travel Foundation

In 2023 we approached the Travel Foundation about their research project on the economic impact – both positive and negative – of the travel industry on destination supply chains. We wanted to know how it impacts real livelihoods, not cells in a spreadsheet.

We have always seen this area as the core of our “force for good” ethos – how can we ensure that the financial benefits of the international travel industry are shared fairly? This is the fundamental reason for structuring TravelLocal so that travelers create and book holidays directly with our local travel partners around the world. In simple terms, it is an inversion of the more traditional tourism model, where the destination economy receives less and the traveler pays more. In the end, both lose out. The Travel Foundation’s report will be published later this year. We are proud to have sponsored and contributed towards it.

[Find out more](#)

Selecting & certifying our local travel partners

Our Local Travel Partner Charter

Once launched later in 2024 our Local Travel Partner Charter will become our key set of sustainability standards for all holidays sold through the TravelLocal platform. Through the Charter we can recognise the amazing work that many of our local travel partners do in this area, and support them in their sustainability journey, as well as providing more transparency to our travelers.

Our Charter criteria are closely aligned with our sustainability policy and Travelife guidelines. They cover topics such as sustainable office operations, offering the most carbon-friendly means of transport possible on tours, giving a preference to locally owned suppliers, and much more.

Travelife

Now that we are Travelife Partners we can offer all of our local travel partners free access to the full Travelife training suite – a collection of useful, practical resources about how to implement sustainability in day-to-day operations.

We are aiming to become Travelife Certified in 2025, and maximize the number of our local travel partners that engage with Travelife training, ultimately reaching Partner or Certified status themselves by 2030.

[Find out more](#)



T.J Stapleton

— Tom Stapleton,
Co-Founder & CEO

The future

As you can see from this report, we have come a long way in the last year. Our goal of making travel a force for good feels closer, though we have much still to do.

So much has improved since our earliest days as a business. We are now trying to measure and assess our impact on our destinations, our local travel partners, and the environment. From those measurements have come real, practical improvements. We have taken our business through rigorous certification processes that have looked into every aspect of what we do. And we are now supporting four global charities that share our values. Each time you book a holiday with us you are supporting all this work *directly*.

You are also supporting our ethos of buying locally. In travel, this is particularly important – it's an enormous, global industry that historically has downplayed and under-rewarded local entrepreneurs and their teams in each destination. We think this is the new frontier in sustainability – the social and financial impact of tourism, and the need to ensure that local destination economies get just rewards for everything they do.

Having a positive impact is a “dependent endeavor”. We depend on our team, our local travel partners, and, above all, on you – our customers – to help us improve, and ensure we are living up to our own vision.

There are many ways you can help us.

1. **Travel with our local travel partners:** above all – this. These companies are the hidden stars of the travel industry, but also key to unlocking the economic benefits of tourism on behalf of local people. It has never been more important to consider this when creating and booking a holiday.
2. **Feedback:** when you return from one of our trips, get in touch with us to let us know if you felt any aspect was particularly positive or negative. It helps us learn and change.
3. **Suggest improvements:** have you seen an idea elsewhere in your life that has had a truly positive impact on the world? We would love to hear about it – maybe it's something we can do too? Many good ideas can work across a multitude of business sectors.

Thank you, from all of us, and all of our local travel partners, for your continued support.



Katie Traveled to Uzbekistan, 2023

“Throughout the trip, we were lucky enough to have excellent drivers and passionate local tour guides, who went out of their way to make us feel welcome and give us a once in a lifetime experience. Some of the guides even contacted us at night – in their own time and without being asked – to send us restaurant and nightlife recommendations! Each of them had a wealth of knowledge and adapted the tour to suit our needs on the day.

We were able to do so much more with TravelLocal than we would have otherwise been able to and since arriving home, I have been telling everybody to visit Uzbekistan! The cost of the trip was great value for money.”



Stephen Traveled to Nepal, 2023

“The professionalism and dedication were evident... Witnessing how well they took care of their staff was truly commendable and heartwarming.

...Our journey to Everest Base Camp with TravelLocal was nothing short of remarkable. From the seamless organization of the trip to the unwavering support and expertise of our guide Dhruba, every aspect of the adventure was exemplary. We are grateful for the unforgettable memories and cherish the safe and fulfilling experience we had, thanks to the exceptional services of the local tour operator. Without a doubt, we highly recommend them to anyone...”



Stephanie Traveled to Botswana, 2023

“This is my fourth time using TravelLocal, and they are by far my favorite travel agency, since they put me in touch with local agencies who are really specialists in the area they are from. I also like contributing to the local economies. I can’t say enough good things about TravelLocal and their associates. Not only that, but I’ve never had a bad experience and look forward to planning my next trip to Thailand with them!”

Global travel, local experts

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 /travel-local

