

Ethical code Encounter Latin America

Our Ethical code is based on the Global Ethics code of Tourism and this guides us at every step to take decisions which are ethical and important for a healthy business.

Our Ethical Code is designed to engage ELA in fair relationships with interested parties: customers, competitors, staff, destinations and suppliers.

The code is applicable to all employees including the board of directors. It influences our every decision. It is the personal responsibility of every employee to follow and comply with the code.

1. We respect the law

We comply with laws and regulations in all matters, especially concerning the health and safety of our employees and customers, human rights (including children's rights), combating corruption in all its forms, as well as environmental stewardship (including waste management and protection of biodiversity).

2. We respect and promote human rights

We encourage respect and opportunities for vulnerable groups and to reject business related to illegal trafficking, consumption of illegal substances, sexual harassment, sexual exploitation of minors and terrorism in compliance with the code of conduct as set forth by the GCET (Global Code of Ethics for Tourism) y the ECPAT (End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for sexual purposes)

3. Putting child welfare first

We make absolutely sure no child is ever harmed as a result of tourism. Encounter Latin America is committed to the guidelines set forth by the International ChildSafe movement. Our guiding principles

- a. We do not employ children under 18
- b. All children are human beings, who are the subject and receivers of human rights that Encounter Latin America will respect at all times.
- c. All children have equal rights to protection from all forms of abuse and exploitation regardless of their gender, race, health situation, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, social background or culture.

- d. Child abuse is never acceptable.
- e. All children should be encouraged to fulfill their potential and inequalities should be challenged.
- f. Everybody has a responsibility to support the care and protection of children
- g. Our suppliers and the projects we support have a responsibility to meet minimum standards of protection for the children in their programs and activities

4. We build bridges

We value the unique contributions each person makes. We believe in diverse backgrounds, ideas and perspectives and believe by building bridges between our cultures we will learn, understand and essentially become a better person.

- a. Our excursions and activities should be conducted in harmony with the attributes and traditions of our destinations and in respect for their laws, practices and customs;
- b. Our native communities, on the one hand, and local professionals, on the other, should acquaint themselves with and respect the traveler who visits them and find out about their lifestyles, tastes and expectations; the education and training imparted to professionals contribute to a hospitable welcome;
- c. Travelers have the responsibility to acquaint themselves, even before their departure, with the characteristics of the destinations they are preparing to visit; they must be aware of the health and security risks inherent in any travel outside their usual environment and behave in such a way as to minimize those risks.

5. We safeguard our natural environment

We plan our excursions and activities in such a way as to protect the natural heritage composed of ecosystems and biodiversity and to preserve endangered species of wildlife

- a. We minimize as much as possible the negative impact on the environment of our footprint.
- b. We support biodiversity conservation: including protected areas and areas of high biodiversity, through for example financial contribution, supporting actions and integration in product offers.
- c. Sustainability aspects in destinations are considered in the selection process of new destinations (e.g. traffic-free areas, sustainable city planning, proper waste management infrastructure and community participation). Possibly alternative non-mainstream destinations are offered.
- d. We refrain from promoting souvenir items derived from threatened wildlife and plant species.
- e. We ensure that any animals involved in any of our trips have the right to the five animal freedoms: Freedom from hunger or thirst, Freedom from discomfort, Freedom from pain, injury or disease, Freedom to express normal behavior, Freedom from fear and distress

6. We safeguard our cultural heritage

Our activities and excursions are conducted with respect for the artistic, archeological and cultural heritage. One goal of the tourism industry is to highlight the diversity and richness of culture and heritage in destinations.

- a. We value and protect the natural resources, culture and heritage of local communities.
- b. We ensure local culture and customs are well explained, tour guides can help travelers minimize cultural shock and enjoy the experience at destinations. In return, local communities would feel respected and welcome visitors better to their culture.
- c. We ensure our visits to any cultural heritage site are respectful and share with our travelers the importance of these.
- d. We discourage travelers purchasing historic and archaeological artefacts (except as permitted by law).

7. We keep it local

We protect the economy of the local communities. Keeping the profit in the community will both ensure that the destination continues to exist, and the local community can prosper. Supporting local entrepreneurs and small businesses strengthens communities, raises the overall quality of life, and ensures that the places we love will continue to be loved.

- a. We work with small, locally owned businesses, rather than big international chains
- b. We include activities and promote excursions to clients that directly involve and support local communities
- c. Based on a fair-trade model, we promote community-based tourism in direct cooperation with local residents and invite tourists to visit their communities to discover local habitats and wildlife in their region and share their traditional meals, ancestral rituals, cultural activities, language, and values.

8. Fair relationship with employees

- a. We provide a healthy and safe working environment
- b. We provide equal opportunities to all, Discrimination based on gender, age, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion or personal beliefs is not acceptable.
- c. We pay fair wages to provide for the needs of our workers and their families;
- d. We respect the labor law and the right of our workers to participate to trade unions or collective labor collective labor agreements;
- e. We develop, implement and maintain strong safety and health standards (through medical insurance, maternity leave and disability risks for our employees);
- f. We ensure good working conditions at least in compliance with national regulations. To do so, our company binds formal contracts in writing,
- g. We refuse Child labor and all forms of forced and compulsory labor
- h. We provide regular trainings and awareness campaigns to our staff

- i. We ensure our employees free expression and satisfaction in the company.

9. Customer experience

Everything we do, we do for travelers. They are our reason for existence. They are seeking a unique, authentic, safe and pleasant experience, and it is our duty to make our best efforts to deliver an experience that meets their every expectation. We must absolutely inspire the trust of travelers and do everything to make sure we deserve it.

- a. We provide a safe, high-quality and professional product or service that complies with industry best practices.
- b. We make sure that their product or service always meets or even exceeds industry standards.
- c. We strive to ensure the sustainability of their product or service, by informing travelers about the key sustainability challenges at the destination.
- d. We charge our customers a fair price, it includes the corresponding taxes and is both fair to our local providers and to the customer
- e. We respect customer privacy: In our operations we respect customer privacy and take reasonable measures to ensure the security of personal data collected, stored, processed or disseminated.
- f. We provide our travelers with objective and honest information on their places of destination and on the conditions of travel, hospitality and stays.
- g. We ensure that the information regarding excursions, activities, hotels and destinations is accurate, informative and real
- h. We address complaints and claims in an expeditious and courteous manner, in order to cultivate customer loyalty.

10. Fair relationship with suppliers

Encounter Latin America holds suppliers to the same standards of integrity to which we hold ourselves. All suppliers are informed of our Ethical Code when entering a business relation with us.

- a. Selection of Supplier: The selection of suppliers is based on merit, quality of service and reputation. Asking for a commission from a supplier/ guides for being selected and used is considered as corruption and is prohibited.
- b. Preferred status: Accommodations and excursions/ activity suppliers which engage actively in sustainability will be highlighted to agents in our communication and marketing efforts. Encounter Latin America will provide advice to suppliers to assess their sustainability level.
- c. We are loyal to our suppliers and pay them a fair price for their services.

11. Fair relationship with competitors

Encounter Latin America is committed to invest in respectful and open relationships with its competitors. Where possible we support collaborative initiatives regarding the sustainability and sustainable development of our destinations