



Sustainable  
Travel Series

**FCM**

# A force for good

Giving back to  
the community

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## Are you a conscientious corporate traveller?

FCM has produced a series of five in-depth reports on sustainability strategies in the hospitality industry, detailing carbon and energy conservation, water scarcity and pollution, waste and community engagement.

As a key pillar in corporate social responsibility, any robust sustainability programme should include initiatives to drive community engagement. From facilitating staff volunteering to organising fund raising activities, this fifth and final report in our sustainability series looks at how the travel industry is working to make a positive contribution to local communities.

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## Driving community engagement

**For the travel industry in particular, the world is our workplace. That's why companies across the sector are increasingly focusing their sustainability strategies on the global environment; its wildlife; its people, their culture and their economies.**

Whether partnering with NGOs (non-profit organisations) to drive sustainable tourism or encouraging staff to take part in community initiatives, the remit of sustainability strategies is changing. More than ever before, the travel industry is looking to drive positive change for communities around the globe. In particular, to where airlines fly, and where hotels and car hire companies operate. The Air France Foundation, for example, runs 76 projects in 57 countries to help disadvantaged children as well as contributing Eur 15million in financial support to community projects.

Supporting children and young people in a bid to improve their life chances is a major focus of this particular philanthropic activity. More generally, companies are also striving to add economic and social value in the areas where they operate. They work with local partners through their procurement departments to support projects to help the wellbeing of local communities and future generations.

**Robust CSR strategies promote a positive contribution to local life.**

Community engagement can take many forms, including building projects, education, organisation,

a direct service, economic development, research and institutional engagement. Whatever the project, it should uphold the principles of fairness, diversity, equality, empowerment and self-determination.

Today, robust CSR strategies promote a positive contribution to local life and aim to minimise the environmental impact on the communities in which hotels and airlines serve.

Community engagement has become a real buzz word and annual reports highlight the myriad projects being undertaken across the globe with the help of NGOs on the ground.

In this whitepaper we take a closer look at the positive changes a range of travel companies have achieved in the area of community engagement.

**“If you could spend a dollar and create social value and a positive environmental impact, surely it's a no brainer. Sustainability is no longer a ‘nice to have’, it's a ‘must have’. Large businesses have to do more to create a more diverse and inclusive society.”**

JEREMY WILLIS,  
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT, PWC





## Airlines active in the community

**From providing humanitarian aid to assembling hygiene kits, airlines around the world are embracing an increasingly wide range of community initiatives. Here we explore some of the ways airlines are making a real difference on the ground.**

In 2018, Cathay Pacific revised its community engagement strategy to make a greater impact by focusing its work under four pillars, namely to promote children and youth development; to facilitate global cultural exchange; to develop environmental awareness around its operations; and to encourage diversity and inclusion in employment.

From this, two new programmes were developed to focus on youth development, diversity and inclusion, environmental protection and global cultural exchange. World As One launched in 2018 together with Social Ventures Hong Kong, NGO VolTra and ELIV to introduce an alternative travel experience, and Cathay ChangeMakers was implemented last year.

World As One took a group of youngsters from Hong Kong's ethnic minorities and those that had battled drug addiction to Cambodia for five days to undertake volunteer work. They built new homes for local villagers, took local children to heritage sites so they could learn more about their own country, and visited NGOs and social enterprises to learn about the needs of local communities and the solutions designed to benefit them.

### Robust CSR strategies promote a positive contribution to local life

Cathay's Chief Customer and Commercial Officer Paul Loo highlighted that the experience was invaluable and a force for positive social change.

"It was heart-warming to see how the youngsters interacted with the Cambodian people and how they learned to understand and empathise with their issues and circumstances," he said.

Cathay ChangeMakers aims to raise awareness of Hongkongers who have made a positive contribution to society. Awards have already been given to the funder of a food rescue and assistance programme, a registered social worker committed to helping ethnic minorities and to the director of an award-winning documentary, "A Plastic Ocean". ChangeMakers is vowing to showcase and promote these important causes to a wider audience.

# 1.85 bln

Around 1.85 billion people, or 36% of the world's population, live in extreme poverty.

Source: [www.worldvision.org](http://www.worldvision.org)

Across the Atlantic, United is undertaking a range of sustainability projects including keeping unused hygiene products from the airline's amenity kits out of landfill. Airline staff volunteer to re-package unused amenity kit items and send them to those in need. To date, United has assembled almost 50,000 new hygiene kits, teaming up with Clean the World to help reduce the number of unnecessary hygiene-related deaths.

**"Being a responsible and sustainable airline means more than investing in products and services that reduce our impact on the environment."**

MARIA WAITE, MD OF PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT AND BRAND MANAGEMENT, UNITED AIRLINES

The airline's Maria Wal er, MD of Product Development and Brand Management, explains: "Being a responsible and sustainable airline means more than investing in products and services that reduce our impact on the environment. It means working directly with our employees and partners to improve the lifecycle of those products and the communities we serve."

United's Watts of Love initiative has brought safe, solar-powered lanterns to communities with no electricity in countries such as Mozambique, the Philippines and Nepal. The lanterns prevent villagers using kerosene lamps which are both

expensive and dangerous in terms of the toxic fumes they emit and the fire hazard they pose.

Passengers can also donate their accrued miles to a programme called Miles on a Mission and choose one of the airline's philanthropic partner organisations to use them to fly people and supplies around the world.

Meanwhile, the Latin American airline LATAM takes a broad view of sustainability, understanding that corporate citizenship enriches its connections with customers, employees, communities, governments and suppliers to build positive relationships and obtain what it calls a Social License to operate, effectively a vote of confidence among interested parties.

LATAM invested US\$4.8m across community projects, charitable donations and commercial initiatives, and staff volunteered 5,460 hours.

LATAM operations are also made available for social and humanitarian aid, providing air tickets and cargo space in times of disaster.

The airline has run its Cuido mi Destino programme since 2009. The programme engages employee volunteers, students and others to repair or rebuild tourist spots and to provide training for the local community. In Chile LATAM helped train guides at the Huilo Hui lo nature reserve and built an exclusive area for them. Other projects stretched across a pedestrian trail in Columbia, a zoo in Ecuador, and the building of safety paths, handrails and signs in Cusco, Peru.



Through Flying Start, the airline's global charity partnership with Comic Relief, **British Airways** has been fund raising to help change the lives of vulnerable and disadvantaged people in the UK and around the world. Since the Flying Start partnership with Comic Relief began in 2010 the airline's customers and colleagues have raised over £.22 million, helping support more than 620,000 people in the UK and in some of the world's poorest communities.

**Air France KLM Group** supports local developments in the destinations the fly to. Air France partners with a number of social enterprises, universities and NGOs to drive sustainable tourism. These include Make tourism a positive catalyst for change.

Air France partners with a number of social enterprises, universities and NGOs to drive sustainable tourism. They include Make a Difference, a Filipino company creating alternative travel experiences; Double Sens, a tour operator which creates promotional films on responsible tourism; and Myafricanstartup which supports incubator start-ups in Africa.

In 2018 the Air France Humanitarian Aid Department supported 35 NGOs helping children in need of medical care and issued over 400 tickets for medical teams and for the repatriation of sick children.

One long-standing relationship is with Gawad Kalinga, which began with the building of a village for 60 people north of Manila that was previously an urban slum.

For over 40 years Air France has partnered with the Acting for Life NGO which operates across Africa, Latin America, Asia, the Middle East and Oceania with economic and regional development programmes. These include support for small livestock and arable farmers, and vocational training and integration for the most disadvantaged populations. The airline also supports Aviation Sans Frontieres, the emergency aid organization.

Each year employees volunteer to assist aid associations in multiple regions embracing childcare, the environment, disability and education to fight against poverty. In 2018 some 1,000 employees took part, helping 43 aid organisations.

## Hotels active in the community

Airlines are not alone in their efforts to act as a positive catalyst for change. The mega hotel group **Marriott International** launched a dedicated sustainability and social impact platform called Serve 360: Doing Good in Every Direction, which crystallised work Marriott has been doing in this area for many decades. President and CEO Arne Sorenson refers to the initiative as "making a lasting, positive difference in the world". It has four areas of priority: nurture our world; sustain responsible operations; empower through opportunity, and welcome all and advance human rights.

**Being a responsible and sustainable airline means more than investing in products and services that reduce our impact on the environment.**

The range of activities undertaken for Nurture our World is wide ranging and includes alleviating poverty and hunger, quality education, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, economic growth and decent work. Total cash and in-kind contributions (such as room nights, event space and food and beverages) totalled US \$47.6m in 2018 which helped boost reforestation activities, particularly in the State of Amazonas in Brazil and the mangrove swamps of Thailand, improved the vitality of children through its partnership with the Children's Miracle Network Hospitals (a 36-year

relationship helping sick children across the us and Canada) and helped improve the lives of more than 4-5m children in 190 countries through UNICEF. In addition, some US\$6.1m was contributed by Marriott to support communities hit by natural disasters and hardships in 2018. In the same year more than 43m loyalty points were donated to support the company's philanthropic partners.

Marriott employees are encouraged to participate in an annual global day of volunteerism, Spirit to Serve Our Communities Day, which has been running for 20 years. Some 10,000 staff from sister brand Ritz-Carlton last year volunteered for Smile Asia Week which raised funds to deploy medical volunteers offering corrective and reconstructive surgery to children living in remote or medically inaccessible areas in the region.

Fellow major player **Radisson Hotels** has equally impressive credentials in this area. For the last 26 years the company has run an annual Community Action Month in June to support communities around the world such as SOS Children's Villages. Staff undertake close to 1,000 activities worldwide to provide food, shelter and a better future for children and young people who need it most. This initiative adds significantly to the year-round support provided through the hotel group's Responsible Business programme.





In June last year Radisson staff gave over 50,000 volunteer hours and raised more than US\$480,000 in cash and in-kind for local children's charities. Moreover, each of the group's 1,100 hotels sponsor the upbringing and education of at least one child per hotel.

**We live in a world where one in ten children have lost - or is at risk of losing - their parental care, so it is vital to help provide these children with a loving home, a good education and a good start in life.**

INGE HUIJBRECHTS, GLOBAL SENIOR VP, RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS AND SAFETY & SECURITY FOR RADISSON HOTEL GROUP

"We care about the next generation," says Inge Huijbrechts, Global Senior VP, Responsible Business and Safety & Security for Radisson Hotel Group. "We live in a world where one in ten children have lost - or is at risk of losing - their parental care, so it is vital to help provide these children with a loving home, a good education and a good start in life."

"I am immensely proud to see the effort our teams around the world have put into volunteering and fundraising. Their actions and donations will make a big difference to 9,200 children and young people."

The French-owned hotel group **Accor Hotels** has also long been committed to sustainable development, and

since 2012 all such activity has fallen under the Planet 21 banner. Its current five-year plan, launched in 2016, includes a major push to work with local communities, having 100% of its hotels engage in a citizen or solidarity project; ensuring the roll-out of its Planet 21 programme in all hotels to combat the sexual exploitation of children; and targeting the planting of 1 0 million trees by 2021 through its Plant for the Planet programme.

Since 2008, the Solidarity AccorHotels endowment fund has been fighting against the social and economic exclusion of the most disadvantaged communities thanks to the commitment of its employees. More than 320 projects have been supported by some 20,000 committed employees over the last ten years. A flagship project is IECD, a training centre in the Mae Sot region in the mountains of Thailand. In another initiative, Solidarity AccorHotels has been supporting the Rescue and Hope association since 2016 and has opened a training centre for people in difficulty in the processing of agricultural and cosmetic products.

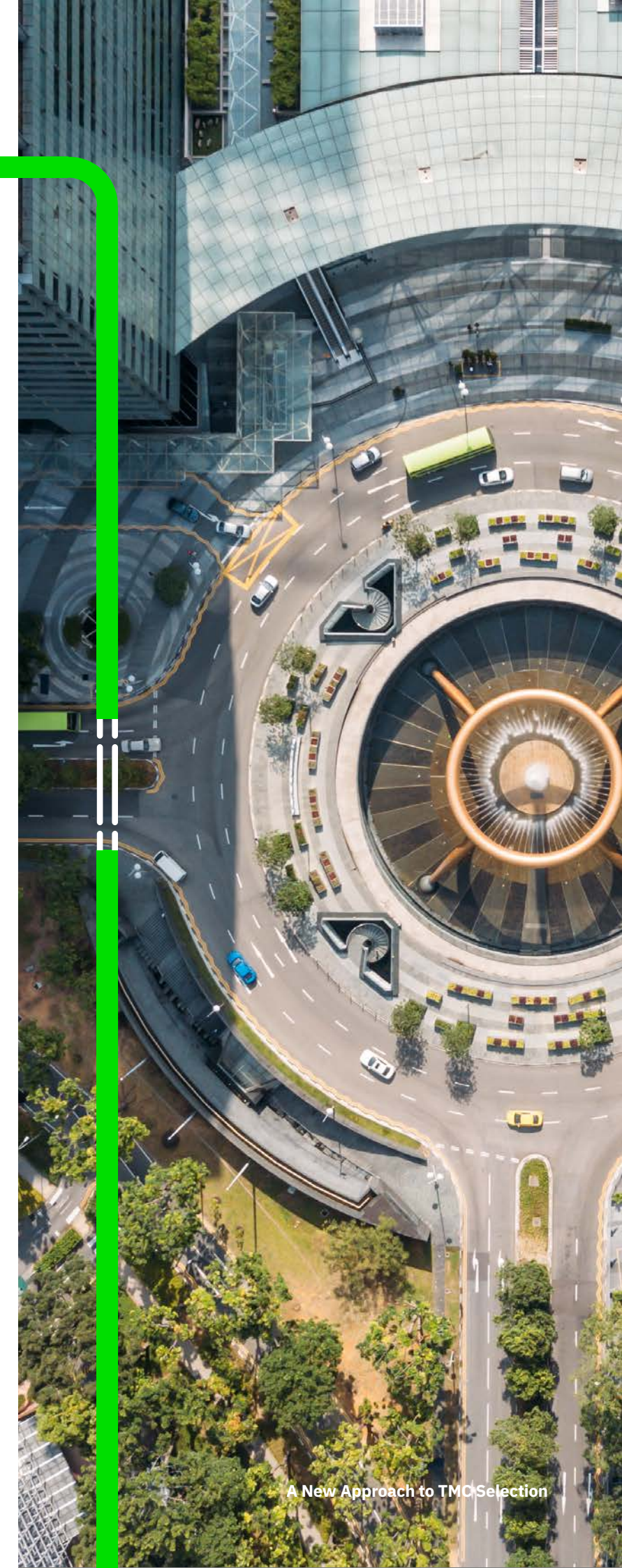
Community engagement is one of the four pillars of **Grange Hotels'** CSR strategy and drives change through both investment and development. To this end Grange partners with 17 local and international charities including Great Ormond Street Hospital Children's Charity, Make - A - Wish, Prince's Trust, Macmillan Cancer Support, BBC Children in Need and EY. In addition, Grange supports and raises funds for a host of charities through volunteering, providing meetings and event space, providing aid, raffle prizes and auction prizes.

**IHG**, the mega hotel company, has a wide-ranging community engagement strategy which includes the IHG Academy Programme which works with local communities and academic partners to offer work experience in hotels and corporate offices. In 2018 some 13,531 people benefited from the programme across 70 countries. The company also partners with NGO Junior Achievement Worldwide which prepare,; young people for future employment. Last year the partnership supported 750 young people in nine major markets around the world and next year it will run a set of innovation camps, to focus on solving a sustainability-based problem central to the hospitality industry.

### **In 2018 IHG responded to 12 natural disasters**

IHG also helps local communities in times of disaster. In 2018 the company responded to 12 natural disasters in ten locations across six countries that impacted its hotel-based colleagues, and gave small financial grants to help 685 colleagues. IHG also partners with Sichuan Province Foundation for Poverty Alleviation to deliver a series of disaster preparedness training sessions to teachers and students in schools.

For the last two years IHG has staged a Giving for Good Month, and in September 2019 some 160,000 IHG colleagues in 88 countries took part in diverse activities including beach cleaning in Thailand, charity concerts in China, reforestation in Mexico and hot meals for the homeless in Germany.





# Car hire companies active in the community

With companies across the travel sector focusing their sustainability strategies on community engagement. It's no surprise that car hire companies are also active in this space.

The US-based car hire company Enterprise drives many of its community engagement projects out of its US HQ, but with a global element such as its 2006 pledge to plant 50m trees over 50 years in the US, Canada and Europe,

Other philanthropic initiatives include supporting scholarship and housing programmes for families of veterans, fighting hunger under its Fill Your Tank programme with a pledge of US\$60m to feed the old and young in America, supporting food banks in Canada and the rest of the world, and US\$30m committed to healthy rivers under the Routes & Roots: Enterprise Healthy Rivers Project.

The car hire company Hertz meanwhile has a Community Engagement Committee which has partnered with the Annual Rhythm Restoration Food Drive for the last eight years to help provide five million meals to children all over the US during the summer months.

Avis Budget Group's CSR strategy revolves around people, future and life, the latter aimed at inspiring change and strengthening communities.

Its Inspire the World programme challenges its 30,000+ employees to volunteer, collaborates with NGOs and charities such as Make-A-Wish and Age UK to support children's health and communities, and donates money to help combat homelessness, promote equality and to green cities.

Examples include Budget Los Angeles employees helping the Cheer LA programme which aims to fight the HIV/AIDS epidemic, employees in the company's Australian HQ cooking meals for families with sick children, the head office team in Budapest helping INOUT, a local hostel that recruits and supports people with disabilities with much-needed repairs and Singaporean employees preparing package meals for Willing Hearts, a soup kitchen delivering food to the homeless.

# 1 in 9

Globally, 1 in 9 people don't have enough food to be healthy and lead an active life.

Source: World Food Programme



## The FCM perspective

**As a global travel management company, we strive to ensure an equal sharing of the benefits and burdens of travel. Through the collective efforts of FCM's people, Industry partners and customers, we aim to give back to the communities where we work, live and travel.**

The Flight Centre Foundation is at the heart of our corporate and social responsibility strategy, and works with charity partners all over the world. In Soweto, South Africa, the Flight Centre Foundation has supported the rebuilding and repair of Qhobosheane primary school, with employees from the UK flying out to pick up tools and help. We have also provided solar energy packs to areas without the electricity to generate light and across the globe.

At a local level, our people are continually raising money for projects and charities in their own communities. From bake sales to abseiling, as part of the Flight Centre Foundation FCM is also committed to supporting our Charity of the Year, the country's largest charity dedicated to helping everyone make the most of later life.

## Solarbuddy: Ending Energy Poverty

Approximately 18% of the world's population has no access to electricity - which equates to 1.4bn people living in the dark. This severely impacts education, health, the economy and the environment. FCM's charity partner SolarBuddy aims to help break this cycle and improve the educational outcomes of six million children living in darkness, by providing them with solar lights to study after dusk.

Over the last year, delegates and staff attending various FCM conferences and events have also been building SolarBuddy lights to send to children in Papua New Guinea, South Africa and Madagascar.



## The sustainable travel series

With the topic of sustainability on everyone's lips and increasingly on travel managers' radars, it's clear momentum is gathering. Whilst there is still a long way to go, our sustainable travel whitepaper series has shown that from travellers to suppliers, the will is there to drive more responsible and conscientious corporate travel.

All five reports in our series on sustainable travel, can be found at [fcmtravel.co.uk](http://fcmtravel.co.uk). They cover carbon and energy conservation, water scarcity and pollution, waste reduction and community engagement and each report details the actions being taken by the industry to become sustainable for the long-term.



FCM is a single global brand providing a comprehensive range of corporate travel and expense management solutions. We have a presence in more than 95 countries and are regarded as one of the top five travel management companies in the world. FCM is responsible for the travel programmes of some of the world's most successful corporate brands.

It has always been personalised service that sets FCM apart from the rest and we blend this with innovative technology and unrivalled access to content to drive the optimum performance of your travel programme.

Contact us today to find out how FCM can elevate the performance of your corporate travel programme.

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