

GROUND Community Development in Asia Launched for Students



GROUND is a new member of the World Youth Student and Educational Travel Confederation

YAANA Ventures, which advises and manages responsible travel and hospitality companies, today launched GROUND, which partners with local communities in Asia to help their sustainable development by matching their interests with schools, colleges, companies and specialist travel agencies.

GROUND will adhere to the triple bottom line of people, planet and profit.

GROUND's programs for students aim to create beneficial engagements between the students and business teams and local communities by using a balanced mix of service, education and leisure. The programs will help students apply their classroom learning to make significant changes in the lives of less privileged people, often at village level.

The experiences are designed to strengthen leadership skills, build resilience, and teach cross-cultural understanding.

"When GROUND does its job right, students' knowledge will be tested, improved and used to the benefit of local communities," said Pharatah Senapan, General Manager at GROUND.

"What sets GROUND apart is our long-term community development approach as opposed to the 'one-off come and go' approach that doesn't truly benefit the locals," she said.

Projects will address health care, water supplies, sanitation, housing, education, environmental conservation, community infrastructure, capacity building and sports coaching. Before helping the host communities, schools, colleges and companies typically raise the funds for the project.

GROUND makes sure that visitors get updates on the progress of the project after they have left.

The idea for GROUND came after 10 years' of Khiri Travel (a YAANA Ventures company) successfully handling trips for student groups. These included experiences in Cambodia for the American Youth Leadership Program, programs in northern Thailand for international schools in Singapore, and BISJ students visiting the Mekong Delta, and more.

Staff at GROUND will also draw on eight years' community development experience at Khiri Reach, the charitable arm of Khiri Travel.

"Along the way we learned that a destination management company or tour operator is not really set up to deliver the sustainability element of community development," said Willem Niemeijer, CEO of YAANA Ventures. "The focus must be on the needs of the community as much as on the quality of the experience of the visitor."

The full range of GROUND's projects and services can be seen online at GROUNDasia.com, including testimonials.

GROUND is a member of the World Youth Student and Educational Travel Confederation and will participate in the confederation's conference in Belgrade in September.

Further information email: business@groundasia.com or visit GROUNDAsia.com

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Editors can download high resolution images of YAANA Ventures and travel destinations at <http://www.scottasia.net/clients/YAANA/media.htm>.

ABOUT YAANA Ventures

YAANA Ventures is an owner, partner and operator of entrepreneurial travel and hospitality ventures in Asia. We distinguish ourselves by sharing real experiences that are grounded in the cultural richness of Asia. We are champions of the triple bottom-line: we empower our ventures with the values to nurture the people with whom we work, to sustain the planet we all share, and to pursue profits to expand our mission. Visit yaana-ventures.com

ABOUT GROUND

GROUND partners with local communities across Asia to assist in their sustainable development. We create customized journeys for students and business teams that strengthen leadership skills, build resilience and teach cross-cultural understanding. Our transformational programs leave a lifelong legacy for both GROUND participants and local communities.

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