



ANNUAL REPORT

- 2019 -

www.exofoundation.org



EXOFoundation

OUR VISION



*Use tourism to make
destinations better
places for people to
live in, and for
travellers to visit.*

OUR STRATEGY

Our ambition is to pave the way for mainstreaming good practices within the travel industry in Asia. We aim to **maximise the potential for tourism to become a tool for poverty alleviation and sustainable development**. As a leading DMC, it is our responsibility to protect this region's unique natural and cultural heritage for the long term success of tourism.

Our dedicated teams are constantly promoting responsible tourism with long-term strategies. Our teams seek to **improve the livelihoods of the most disadvantaged populations, while minimising the negative social, cultural and environmental impact that tourism may generate**.

We support and drive sustainable projects promoting responsible tourism in Asia. Our projects address various socio-cultural, environmental and economic issues. We are prudent in the way donations are spent and carefully select projects according to the following criteria:

- **Efficiency:** regular updates requested on project advancement once a donations are made.
- **Transparency:** written past annual financial and activity reports.
- **Relevance:** projects are aligned with our goals and vision offering long-term solutions for development.
- **Engagement:** encouraging EXO Travel employees to contribute through their voluntary efforts to directly address needs faced with project beneficiaries and to promote gender equality.

From 2020, grants will be attributed based on the following guidelines:

Local Initiatives: 40% of the funds available for the year are attributed to local initiatives within the destinations. The funds are equally divided among all destinations. Funds attribution is decided at a country level, involving EXO Travel staff throughout the year.

Innovations for sustainability: 60% of the funds are dedicated to large scale projects with a measurable impact and a clear link to responsible travel. In addition, EXO Foundation must be able to play an active role in the project.



OUR GOALS

To raise funds from EXO Travel's B2B clients and to encourage them to donate directly to EXO Foundation for our carefully curated projects or to make yearly donations based on the number of travellers they have sent to Asia.

PLANET

CLIMATE ACTION

To reduce ecological footprint of the travel industry and to lower its negative effects in Asia

ANIMAL PROTECTION

To ensure that their freedom is respected and that they are cared for if they are endangered by human activities

BIODIVERSITY PRESERVATION

To raise awareness on biodiversity conservation, especially when it is threatened by tourism activities

PEOPLE

EDUCATION & POVERTY ALLEVIATION

To empower the most disadvantaged to break the cycle of poverty and learn job skills, with a special focus on children protection and rights.

CULTURE

To protect historical heritage, revitalise local arts and crafts and support cultural revival.

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

To improve living conditions of the poorest via the creation of income generating activities; community based tourism (CBT), fair trade shops, agriculture and handicrafts.

- EXO Foundation donations are granted based on project needs and funds provision. We try to ensure financial support until projects become self-sufficient.
- We can fund up to 100% of the project's budget if it is directly managed by EXO Travel employees.
- We prefer to avoid financial contributions to one-time events such as festivals, sports events etc...

Our main source of funding is donations from EXO Travel and from corporate and social responsible activities of incentive groups. **EXO Travel donates US\$1 per traveller to EXO Foundation from its profits and bears the operational costs for offices, employees and communication materials.**

OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS

28

PROJECTS
SUPPORTED

Out of 60 projects officially submitted to our foundation, we have agreed to support 28 of them in 8 different countries. We chose to reduce the number of projects we support by 15% in order to have a bigger impact on the selected ones.

Our external donors have dedicated their funds to 2 additional projects that work towards eradicating poverty and climate change in Cambodia.

The average donation from EXO Foundation is almost \$5,200 per project, which is about 30% more than last year. The most significant ones we've supported up to \$20,000. Overall, we have saved \$15,000 in our yearly budget that will be allocated to 2020's budget.

145k

DONATED TO
PROJECTS

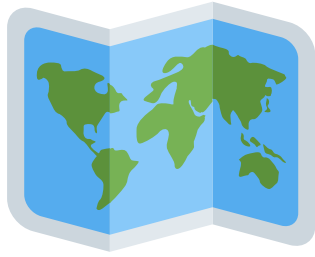
140k

COLLECTED FROM
EXO TRAVEL

20k

COLLECTED FROM
OTHER DONORS

OUR PROJECTS



CROSS-DESTINATIONS

4 projects

\$57,570



CAMBODIA

7 projects

\$14,040



INDONESIA

4 projects

\$11,808



MYANMAR

4 projects

\$9,394



VIETNAM

5 projects

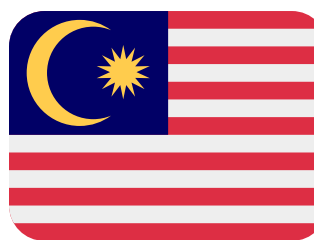
\$8,520



THAILAND

3 projects

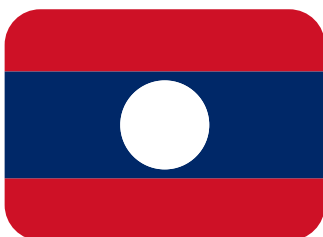
\$7,825



MALAYSIA

1 project

\$7,000



LAOS

2 projects

\$6,000



JAPAN

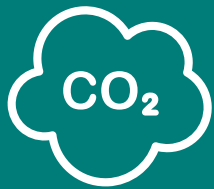
1 project

\$5,000

PLANET

PEOPLE

\$69,74814 **+** **\$75,889**



31%
**Climate
Action**



32%
**Education &
poverty
alleviation**



11%
**Preservation
& awareness**



16%
**Community
Empowerment**



8%
**Animal
protection**



1%
**Local
cultures**



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Through the different projects we fund and assist, we contribute to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In each section of this report, we have highlighted the goals that are addressed by each project.

Overall, we contribute directly or indirectly to 13 SDGs, with 5 dedicated to the protection of the environment and 8 responding to social challenges.



In the frame of our partnership with EXO Travel and our role as sustainability advisor, we work towards 6 main SDGs and encourage EXO's whole supply chain and competitors to get involved in these initiatives towards sustainability.



CLIMATE ACTION

CLIMATE CHANGE IS A REALITY AND THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY MUST LEAD BY EXAMPLE AND PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE IN THE REDUCTION OF ITS EFFECTS ON OUR PLANET. BECAUSE WE TAKE IT SERIOUSLY AND WE FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT WE HAVE TO TAKE ACTION NOW! WE HAVE SUPPORTED TRAVEL COMPANIES TO FUND PROJECTS THROUGH A CARBON OFFSETTING SCHEME THAT WILL HELP TO RESTORE AND PROTECT OUR BEAUTIFUL PLANET.

13 CLIMATE ACTION



15 LIFE ON LAND



12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



EXO
Foundation

PROJECTS THAT SUPPORT CLIMATE ACTION

Working with experts, we have evaluated the carbon footprint of a traveller per day in Asia and translated it into the purchase of carbon credits combined with tree planting activities. We acknowledge that the target is to halve the carbon emissions of travellers in Asia, while helping the industry to find realistic solutions to reduce their carbon emissions, the least we can do today is to offset these standing emissions.

20,000 TREES ADOPTED IN SUMATRA, INDONESIA

This approach led us to purchase and adopt more than 20,000 trees and to set up a partnership with Plan Vivo a certification body to support a forest management project located in Bujan Raba Indonesia. We will promote this project to EXO Travel's clients to encourage them to contribute to this initiative and help us raise more funds towards both of these projects.



ONLINE RESOURCES ON CLIMATE CHANGE FOR STUDENTS

Lifetime access to a curated online platform and resources on Climate Change will be given to deserving students studying in Southeast Asia, in partnership with the prestigious

SunX network created in legacy to Maurice Strong. This year, **we have organized a free webinar on the topic to travel agents in partnership with SunX.**



Scan or click the code to watch the Webinar now!

CAMBODIA

Khmer Green Charcoal has developed a clean cooking fuel technology providing a sustainable alternative to wood-charcoal consumption. Supplying more than 6,500 end-users in Cambodia, the char briquettes are made out of coconut husks which reduces respiratory disease in households, illegal logging and deforestation. They are 100% chemical free and save up to 1 hectare of forest every 3 days. They have received our support to train local people to produce the char briquettes, enabling an additional alternative income to local farmers in rural households.



6,500 END USERS



GREENER ENERGY

PRESERVATION & AWARENESS



EXO
Foundation



In a time when sustainable practices in tourism are needed more than ever, cooperation is necessary to create lasting, positive influences on our destinations and the world around us. To ensure that visitors to Asia can enjoy the region's astounding marine biodiversity, we are proud to be working with The Reef World Foundation to increase the conservation reach of the Green Fins initiative and to support Reef-World towards achieving its charitable objectives as follows:

- to promote the wise use of natural resources, particularly coral reefs and related tropical resources for the benefit of local communities, visitors and future generations.

- to promote the advancement of education about natural resources, coral reefs, related ecosystems and their conservation.

In the frame of this partnership, EXO Travel will be labelling the tours of Green Fins partners on its website and encouraging them to become certified.

It is a win-win situation for economic partners, the environment, your guests and Asia's tourism industry on a whole.



ZERO PLASTIC



Cambodia

Based in the Mondulkiri province, Bousra's team wanted to preserve the beauty of its surrounding nature and to prevent plastic pollution. Thus, with our help they have purchased reusable cutlery and given it to the 14 food vendors selling food in the park, they have also implemented a fine for littering and the park is expected to reduce plastic and styrofoam waste by 90%.



Indonesia

With the inauguration of EXO Travel guides Komisariat (union) in Indonesia, the guides celebrated by organising a ricefield clean-up in partnership with Bali Countryside members, Planet Lover and Trash Heroes.

They have successfully involved the surrounding communities and installed trash bins to keep the area clean. This initiative is solid proof that we are moving towards a more sustainable future in tourism and that there is a growing awareness for environmental protection. We are proud to support it!

Myanmar

In partnership with Thant Myanmar and Myanmar Chefs association, a guide for hotels and restaurants sharing best practices will be soon distributed. With our support, Thant Myanmar will give 10 in-house training to selected restaurants. The guides will focus on local solutions and alternatives featuring only local best practices to guarantee a high level of usability for local restaurants and to create peer pressure among restaurants.



It will tackle 3 sections:

- **In-house consumption**

Water bottles, sachets, straws, chop sticks, cups etc...

- **On-the-go consumption**

Styrofoam boxes, cups, bags, straws

- **Kitchen and supply chain**

Packaging, storing, composting, menu design for food waste reduction

WASTE SOLUTIONS

Cambodia

With the objective to replicate the initiative of Reform Center in Vietnam, we are supporting **Naga Earth in Cambodia** to create affordable and low technology plastic recycling machines, enabling a second chance to plastic waste in Siem Reap. This organisation is already cooperating with hotels and restaurants to promote biodiesel and to produce soap from collected cooking oils. This new project has a strong potential to become self-sustainable and to complete the sustainable solutions offered by Naga Earth.



RIVER CLEAN UP

Indonesia

We take action for a cleaner world and have invested in purchasing a trawl to clean a river. In March 2020, together with Green School Bali and OceanKita, we are installing a river trawl nearby the school. The objective is to promote this technology to hotels on the island and facilitate sea debris clean up as well as river clean up in Bali. The Green School and its students will be in charge of using the technology and removing collected trash from the river.



PLASTIC ROADS

Indonesia

In partnership with Sumba Bisa an association based on the island of the same name in Indonesia, we will build a road made of 10% recycled plastic collected from trash found on the beaches. Slated for April 2020, the project will include the active participation of local communities living on the island. In order to achieve this goal, they have set up a waste collection system that will help to better protect the island.



GREEN RIVER PROJECT

Cambodia

The **Green River Project** was launched in 2017 when EXO Travel Cambodia realised that the rivers were filled with waste and plastic. Not only was this damaging the landscape, it was also harmful to the health of people living nearby. We started this project in Phnom Penh in partnership with Prek Leap National College of Agriculture and its 235 students. Beginning with a training to the students on environmental protection, the students then went on to spread awareness in their own communities to over 100 people.

In 2018, we extended the project to Siem Reap. In partnership with Sala Bai School and Artisans of Angkor, EXO staff led four workshops to train their staff and students about adopting good waste management practices and were able to reach more than 140 people. In 2019, thanks to a fruitful collaboration with Artisans Of Angkor we trained more than 50 supervisors at a silk producing village where there was also a chance to brainstorm on plastic free/plastic reduction in their production process.

We have invited GAEA, a waste collection company based in Siem Reap, to be part of the project at Sala Bai School and together we trained more than 150 students. The day after, the trainees became the trainers. Sala Bai students shared their knowledge to 120 kids around 10 years old from the Wat Svay Primary School before going all together along the Siem Reap River to collect a total of 250 kg of trash in one hour! We were extremely happy with the results and all participants received the EXO Foundation comic book "**Don't waste your waste**" and more than 120 refillable bottles were given to the students.

We have also started a collaboration with GIZ and Plastic Free Cambodia to reach 50 Khnar Po villagers, a community living by the river. They have received a training helping them to prevent the pollution of their natural surroundings.



**845 PEOPLE
TRAINED**



.....

ANIMAL PROTECTION

.....



EXO
Foundation

Malaysia

The Borneo Orangutan is now a critically endangered specie and it may well be extinct in the wild within no more than two or three years. That is the reason why, we have decided to become a gold partner of the charity Orangutan Appeal supporting the management and development of the Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Center in Malaysia. EXO Travel is sending more than 700 travellers a year to this organisation and each tour sold also helps to support this program. In the frame of this partnership there is now also the possibility for travellers to adopt an Orangutan!



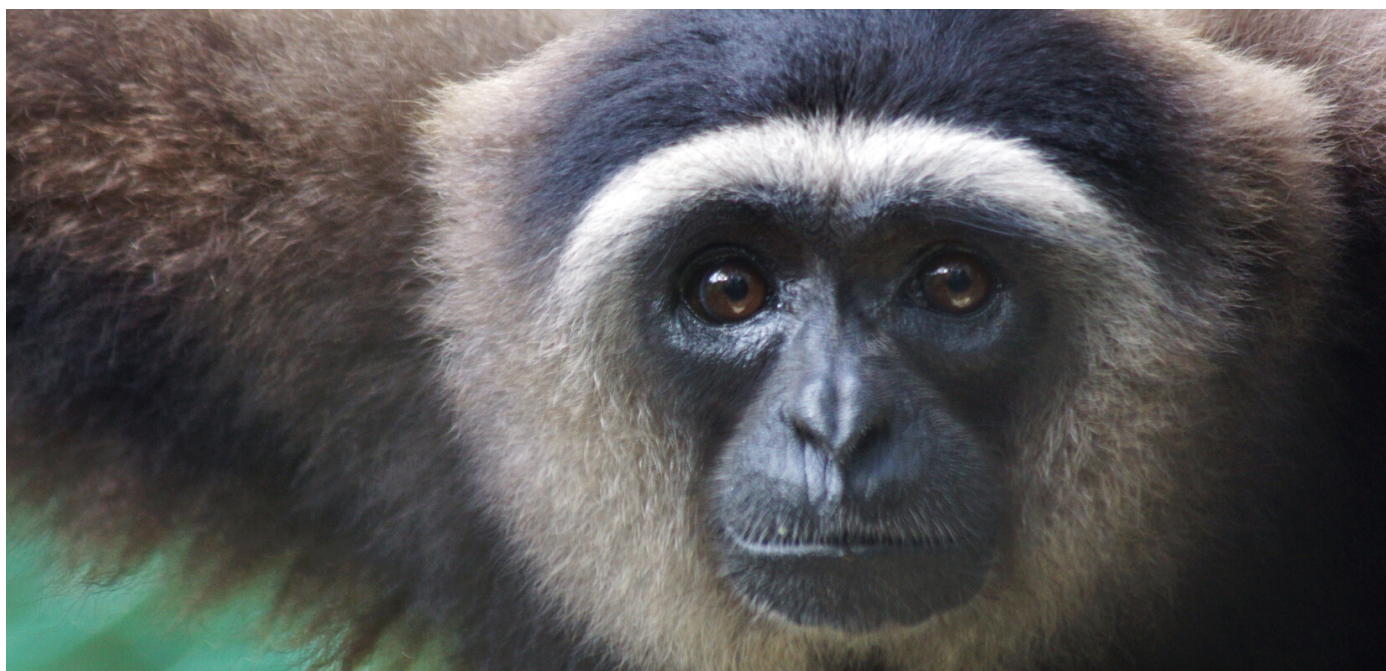


Vietnam

Elephants, Rhinos and Pangolins are critically endangered if not already extinct in Vietnam, in order to raise awareness on the major importance of their protection a street art tour has been organised in cooperation with Change VN. They have taken this opportunity to include other topics to bring to public attention, such as biodiversity, climate change and plastic waste! They have travelled to cities with high wildlife crime rate such as Can Tho, Ca Mau, Nghe An, Mong Cai.

Indonesia

We joined hands with Kalaweit and helped to acquire hectares of forests to protect its magnificent wildlife and prevented palm oil companies from destroying the forests. In 2018, we helped to purchase 3 hectares to create a protected wildlife reserve hiring local people to protect it and we extended it to 5 hectares in 2019. Kalaweit is based in Borneo and Sumatra. They are managing sanctuaries hosting endangered species such as gibbons and orangutans.



.....

EDUCATION & POVERTY ALLEVIATION

.....

1 NO
POVERTY



4 QUALITY
EDUCATION



8 DECENT WORK AND
ECONOMIC GROWTH



3 GOOD HEALTH
AND WELL-BEING



Working with IECD

Training is essential to help young disadvantaged people to get better opportunities and to break the circle of poverty. With IECD we are supporting training programs in hospitality in Vietnam, Myanmar and Thailand for 2,400 young trainees. Vocational training restaurants and bakeries can be visited by travellers and trainees are even planning to open small shops/cafes to sell their products. On top of this, IECD powered a network called ASSET H&C network, which won the coveted PATA CSR Gold Awards, it gathers vocational training schools in Asia aiming to integrate sustainability at the core of the training programs. Together, last year we have released the eco-guide for hospitality schools and businesses.



Cambodia

In 2019, we have worked with Child Helpline Cambodia to promote several training on the issue of child marriage.

Our choice of intervention was based on the prevalent high rate of child marriage, teenage pregnancy and abuse in the Ratanakiri province, particularly among ethnic communities. They are significantly higher than the national percentages, that is why the project targeted these communities. Child Helpline Cambodia has provided counselling, home visits and a phone helpline service to households and adolescents at risk of and affected by child marriage.



ACCESSIBLE KNOWLEDGE

Laos

We are supporters of Lone Buffalo based in Phonsavan in Laos, this organisation creates a unique environment in which boys and girls from different ethnic backgrounds can study, develop, build confidence and play sports together. We are very proud to **sponsor 2 English classes**.



Myanmar

In July 2011, we participated in the opening of Maung Shwe Lay Library in a village south of Ngapali beach. The library is still operating and giving free access to text books, newspaper etc. to local people. EXO Foundation pays the **salaries of the two librarians** and the operation cost of the library.



Myanmar

Since 2011, we covered the salaries for the doctor, nurse, and security guards working at Ah Lett Chuang clinic. An EXO representative visits the clinic on a regular basis and oversees the allocations of funds and donations dedicated to purchasing equipment and medicine. This year, the clinic located in Yangon has suffered numerous alteration due to heavy rain during the monsoon season. Myanmar's Sustainability Team with financial support from EXO Foundation has renovated the clinic along with the villagers in September.

HEALTH FOR ALL

Japan

For the first year, EXO Foundation supports TELL to develop its activities in Japan. This volunteer based organisation is dedicated to providing effective support and counselling services. There are trained volunteers to answer calls every day of the year from people who are struggling with mental illness and social isolation. In 2018 alone, they have answered nearly 9,000 calls and unfortunately the number of calls increases every year.



ໂຮງໝໍເພື່ອນລາວສໍາຫຼັບເດັກນ້ອຍ
LAO FRIENDS
HOSPITAL FOR CHILDREN

Laos

We sponsored Lao Friends Hospital for Children on the occasion of the Luang Prabang Marathon. It is the only **pediatric hospital** in the region, which cares for more than 20,000 children per year!



Cambodia

We have started a new partnership with Aziza's Place in Phnom Penh Cambodia. Established in 2007, this non-profit organisation is a learning and development center supporting 60 underprivileged children. They are all living in vulnerable families that have been marginalised from society and are struggling to provide for themselves. Aziza's Place provides a range of educational and developmental services, helps children to attend public school and offers activities such as skateboarding, karate championships, yoga, arts, hygiene etc.

With our support, they have been able to purchase a new school bus and have adopted a child protection policy. Nowadays, each staff member of the organisation is a certified ChildSafe Agent and they ensure to provide a safe environment for the children. It is widely acknowledged that poverty alone should never justify the separation of children from their parents. As long as they are safe, children are better off with their families or within a family setting. This is why Aziza's Place, initially a residential care center, now operates as a thriving learning and development day center, providing holistic support to their beneficiaries in close collaboration with their families and communities.

It is a very successful project that helps children to grow in confidence and acquire lifelong skills enabling them to achieve financial autonomy and become productive citizens within their communities and beyond. We are very proud to be one of their supporters and we hope to broaden our cooperation.

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

8 DECENT WORK AND
ECONOMIC GROWTH



11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES
AND COMMUNITIES



12 RESPONSIBLE
CONSUMPTION
AND PRODUCTION



EXO
Foundation

ORGANIC FARMING



Vietnam

Located about 3km from the Old Town center of Hoi An, this quietly tucked away farm was established by an expert in nutrition and a team fond of food and local cuisine. Based on the model of “Farm for Future” this place combines cultivation, food production and ecotourism. In addition, the farm is also a community learning center for organic farming, nutrition and healthy living. There are a number of cooking class options around the ancient town Hoi An, this experience is really an outstanding one to offer to travellers!

In order to improve the access to An Farm for both travellers and locals, especially during the rainy season, EXO Foundation has invested in the creation of a pathway through low areas, the improvement of their water system and the creation of a flower arch made from bamboos.

A WALK BACK IN TIME...



Vietnam

The Ky Anh Tunnels were built by the resistance during the most intense period of the American war and remains one of the most historic relics today. The tunnels are located in Thach Tan village only a 40 minutes drive from Hoi An. The Ky Anh tunnels built between 1965 and 1967 have a total length of approximately 32 km, weaving their way under the villages, going through houses, straw piles, bamboo bushes and canals to create a hidden, underground world so that the U.S army would not be able to detect them.

The community that dug the tunnels and witnessed the war is still residing in the village and willing to share their story. Thach Tan village is also known for its traditional handicraft - mat weaving. The combination of these two aspects bears the potential for a unique historical, cultural and artistic experience that can be very beneficial to the community members.

Hence, EXO Foundation in a close partnership with Evergreen labs is working towards building a community-based tourism destination, connecting Ky Anh / Thach Tan community with potential travellers and facilitating potential livelihood improvements and additional income generation activities for the villagers.

At a later stage after the completion of this project, the community is considering to convert some local houses into homestays to increase the visitors' engagement with local people.





PIONEERING CHILDSAFE

Thailand

Thailand tourism has increasingly evolved to include more decentralised and experiential products such as village visits, homestays and other community-based tourism (CBT) products. While CBT offers many opportunities to all those involved, if not properly managed and with its decentralised nature, it can place communities and children at increased risks. ChildSafe Thailand in close collaboration with EXO Foundation, successfully led interventions in three CBT associations in Northern Thailand with the objectives to :

- Empower and build the capacity of local communities engaged in tourism to protect children
- Prevent and mitigate risks to children that are related to tourism activities (eg: school drop-out to work as underage tour guides, sellers or beggars, child performances, orphanage visits or invasive photography, disruption of education by classroom and school visits..)
- Establish self-sustaining systems and protocols in the community to prevent and respond to child protection in tourism.

This initiative involved all the different stakeholders within the communities such as home-stay owners, women's union, schools and local authorities.

SAFE PLAYGROUNDS



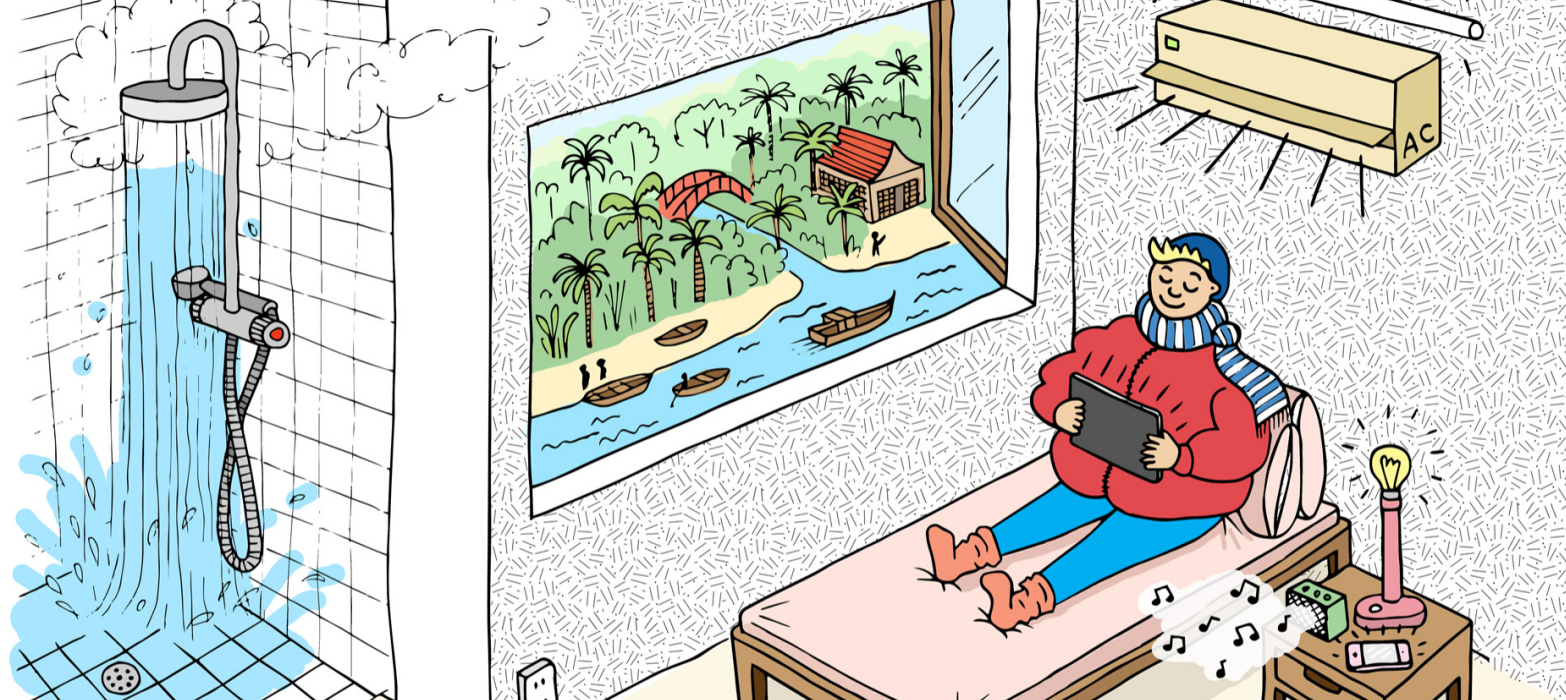
Vietnam

We worked with Think Playgrounds based in Vietnam, with the objective to build greener, friendly public spaces and playgrounds for children. Our team in Hanoi had a fun and hard-working day building a playground for the joys of children and their parents in Linh Nam quarter of Hanoi! We estimated that 500 - 800 children are currently living in the neighbourhood and the local community wanted to have a small playground for their children to play safely in a closed area away from the hustle and bustle of local traffic.

EXO FOUNDATION DAY

On Friday 27th September, EXO Travel teams have celebrated EXO Foundation Day. A great opportunity to learn more about our supported projects in each destinations and to meet with their projects leaders or beneficiaries. It was also a time during which we have invited EXO people to express their wishes for the Foundation. Festive events were organized within a reasonable budget of \$6,000, as well as meaningful activities such as tree planting, building a playground for locals, supporting social enterprises and a lot more.





EXO Travel's SUSTAINABLE EFFORTS

We have continued our efforts to lead EXO Travel on the path towards sustainability through the following initiatives:

- Updating EXO Travel's Responsible Travel Policy.
- EXO Travel is carbon neutral! We have supported the company in its efforts to calculate and compensate its carbon footprint with a third party certified organization. While EXO is working with its supply chain and internally to reduce its emissions, the company has decided to compensate its actual impact.
- Launching of the new edition of the Responsible Tips for travellers booklet designed by @Sofia Holt
- Development of collaborative networks in each certified destinations to work more closely with like minded companies towards sustainability
- Promotion of responsible experiences and hotels to EXO Travel's clients
- Awareness for EXO people and tour guides on sustainable tourism best practices and sustainable lifestyle. Evaluation and promotion of employees satisfaction at work.

TRAVELIFE CERTIFIED

Since 2015, we have played an active role in ensuring EXO Travel's offices across Asia are Travelife certified. Cambodia and Vietnam recently passed their third audits while our offices in Japan and Malaysia carried out their first audit. By 2021, we aim to have all EXO offices Travelife certified!

- **Cambodia** certified since 2015
- **Vietnam** certified since 2015
- **Thailand** certified since 2016
- **Myanmar** certified since 2016
- **Laos** certified since 2016
- **Indonesia** certified since 2018
- **Japan** certified since 2020



OUR TEAM

With 7 dedicated sustainability coordinators, led by a Sustainability Director, the EXO Travel team continues to drive its sustainability agenda forward in 8 destinations across Asia and is responsible for EXO Foundation's operations.



Alexandra Michat
Sustainability & EXO Foundation Director



Maria Herrera
Vietnam Sustainability
Coordinator



**Phonlakrit
Rujirachainon**
Thailand Sustainability
Coordinator



Coralie Baudet
Cambodia Sustainability
Coordinator



Lea Bensaadoun
Laos Sustainability
Coordinator



Zayar Min
Myanmar Sustainability
Coordinator



Chloe Dumont
Indonesia & Malaysia
Sustainability Coordinator



Pamela Ramirez
Japan Sustainability
Coordinator



THANK YOU

EXO
Foundation

www.exofoundation.org



contact@exofoundation.org



EXOFoundation