



WORLD TRAVEL & TOURISM COUNCIL

Tourism for Tomorrow

FINALIST 2015



RED Sustainable Travel

Mexico

At Magdalena Bay in Mexico's Baja California, there is a beach some call Playa de Los Muertos - the Beach of the Dead. Its grisly name is down to the number of turtle carcasses and other marine remains that wash up. One of the most commonly cited reasons for this is poor and unsustainable fishing practices such as the use of the sort of nets that snare the turtles as bycatch.



An innovative tourism start up called Red Sustainable Travel is working to change this, and is using responsible adventure tourism as the means, splitting its operations into two collaborating organisations that can better focus on achieving its aims. First it operates a for profit travel agency that runs high quality adventure tourism packages, bringing visitors to enjoy the turtles as living, swimming creatures and also to experience the other natural attractions of the region. Meanwhile, its non-profit conservation arm works with local community members - often the very fishermen whose nets the turtles are being caught in - to provide them with alternative livelihoods in ecotourism.

So far, the model has been very successful, with the pilot project now expanded to work with 14 similar community enterprises across four states. Some 185 local people have been trained in the principles of sustainability and business management. US\$120,000 has been generated in community salaries from employment in sustainable tourism.



sustainable travel
red

And a further US\$82,000 has been raised from travellers, which is used for conservation and community development projects.

In 2013, Red won ATTA's young operator award and was also featured as one of National Geographic's Top Ten Adventures that Give Back. It's still early days for the company, but for the turtles of Magdalena Bay, it's already a case of better Red than dead.

