

# Inside Travel

## Philosophy, Background and Concept

### The Business Machine and Inside Travel: idea and history

The tourism project Inside Travel is a spin-off product of the Business Machine Initiative ([www.business-machine.org](http://www.business-machine.org)), which wants to find alternatives to aid by promoting development through entrepreneurship and partnership in the private sector: By the end of the year 2009, people from different European countries and from Ethiopia were encouraged to become members of the initiative. There were almost 50 applications among which a selection was made in order to reduce the number to 7 people from each side. In March 2010 a common meeting of the 14 selected participants was conducted in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. During one week, the group tried to identify promising social business ideas for joint implementation. The outcomes of this common creativity process were different concrete business ideas, among them Social Interactive Tourism (later "Inside Travel"). In Europe, Inside Travel (as part of "The Business Machine") is organised as a Swiss non-profit association (tax exempted on the principle of public utility by the Canton of Bern). The team in Ethiopia is organised as a Private Limited Company.



### Our concept of Social Interactive Tourism

Even though not comparable to its neighboring countries like Kenya or Tanzania, Ethiopia is not a white spot on the map when it comes to tourism. However, almost all current offers focus on nature or history, and tourists barely get the chance to come into contact with local people. In classical tourism programs, travelers are picked up at the airport by the tour operator, they lodge in one of the high end hotels with international cuisine, and transportation is assured with private 4wd vehicles. Inside Travel uses a different approach, and gives tourists the chance, to:

**"Discover, Learn. Participate"**



Every Inside trip contains the following elements:

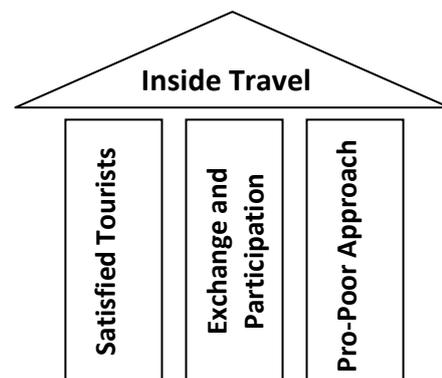
- **Discussions:** Every day, our tourists get in touch with different local persons with various backgrounds. They can ask questions and get first hand information.
- **Exchange:** We try to establish two-way communication: Tourists are not only consumers, they also share their own experiences, for example during a school visit, where they take part in a teaching and exchange programme.
- **Trying out:** Inside Travel does not offer intellectual trips, it can become very physical and our guests have the possibility to try out by themselves handicrafts, farming activities or cultural ceremonies.

- Learning by experience: During our trips, tourists are confronted with situations that raise questions, for example, “what is the right way to help in a developing country”. We do not provide answers, but facilitate and provoke such discussions.
- Experience every day life: Social tourists get the chance to live certain aspects of Ethiopian life by themselves, for example by preparing traditional food or by staying one day with a local family, or by sleeping on the floor in a typical wooden house.
- Being challenged: We give participants the possibility to safely stretch their comfort zone, for example by moving around alone in Addis Ababa.
- Since Ethiopia has a big amount of beautiful sightseeing spots – cultural as well as natural – Inside Travel offers to visit those places as well, in additional and optional “classic tour modules”

### Aims, objectives, and fundamental principles

Our main aim is to provide development through entrepreneurship in a sustainable way. We are aware that our intervention changes societies, but we try to minimize damages and maximize profits. Nevertheless, we act as a business, as we are convinced that profits are a more sustainable source for development than aid. There are three main objectives, we want to achieve with our activities:

1. We provide services and activities that correspond to the interests of our clients. Our tourists will go home happier than they came.
2. In our trips we want to give the possibility to reflect, participate, and exchange. Our trips give the experience of “being part of the same planet”.
3. Our activities should benefit many people, not only those who already have a lot. During our trips, we work with local NGOs and poor people and we use parts of our means to pay their services. After the trip, we give our tourists the possibility to make donations in a transparent way for people, communities or organisations they met during the trip.



### Inside Travel is not...

- ...**travel and help**, because we do not pretend that in the short time our tourists can provide significant help by offering their labour
- ...**a cultural trip**, even though we learn a lot about culture, yet not mainly by seeing monuments, but rather by living some traditions
- ...**adventure tourism**, because we do not focus on adrenalin and outdoor activities but on social adventures
- ...**an educational Trip (“Bildungsreise”)**, because we target rather budget travellers, offer participative activities and simple levels of comfort
- ...**travel and learn**, as our tourists do not mainly want to learn (for example a language) but to experience new things
- ...**eco-tourism**, even though we care about the environment. However we are not only in the nature, but also in the big cities.