

Grassroutes

Networked Village tourism

Team: *Darren Lobo, John Nogueira, Inir Pinheiro*

Grassroutes creates platforms for urban communities to experience authentic village experiences and reconnect with their roots and for the village communities to access and avail of sustainable livelihood opportunities thus conserving their way of life, cultures, biodiversities and knowledge systems.

Grassroutes is working towards establishing a network of over 200 village tourism destinations across India, where tourism is owned, managed & run by the local village communities. Each village tourism destination has positive impacts on both the local village communities as well as tourists. For local village communities, this leads to the conservation & promotion of local lifestyles, cultures, traditions, biodiversities & economies besides providing the villagers with sustainable livelihood opportunities & reduction of migration; while tourists have experienced warm & heartfelt authentic village experiences.

Over the past 4 years we've developed the 'Grassroutes model' of responsible rural tourism in the villages of 'Kohane' & 'Purushwadi' located in the tribal belt of block Akole, district Ahmednagar, Maharashtra, India. We've witnessed a 10-30% increase in average household income in 50 Households per village per year, besides also witnessing an increase in self belief of the village communities

Our team of Inir Pinheiro, John Nogueira and Darren Lobo bring the right blend of experience, community training, marketing, youthful passionate energy and jugad and 'I want to be a part of the change' mindsets the needed to create and sustain a social venture.

Our main challenges are mobilizing of village communities, creating the sustainable market for responsible tourism and managing a decentralized network of village tourism destinations. By 2013 we will address these challenges, enabling us to replicate the model to over 200 villages across India, thus conserving the Real India by celebrating her true identity.. commonality in diversity.

Inir Pinheiro, Head business development and finance: a social entrepreneur working in the field of responsible rural tourism is a post graduate in rural management with over 5 years of varied work experience ranging from fund raising to rural tourism. co-founder of Grassroutes

John Nogueira, Head marketing and sales: a veteran with over 17 years of work experience ranging from sales, customer relation management and human resource

Darren Lobo, Heads operations, social media and strategic accounts: a young energetic national level sportsman with great experience working with college and youth institutions.