

“In that moment, I decided what I would fight for”

For some of us, travel offers up life-changing moments. But there are other ways to make a difference, too



TRIPS WITH BENEFITS Britain's well-known TV and radio host Mariella Frostrup and actor Renée Zellweger meet with schoolgirls outside Monrovia, Liberia. The former founded (and the latter is a benefactor of) GREAT, an organization fighting for gender equality. See page 99 for more.

SOMETIMES IT'S SHOCK that moves us to make a detour off life's comfortable path. Mariella Frostrup, one of Britain's best-known TV newscasters, gave us the following account of her pivotal moment (they don't come much more wrenching than this): "At a refugee camp in Chad, a beautiful Darfur woman told me how the rebels had killed her husband and decapitated her baby in her arms. They'd taken her as a sex slave, then thrown her out, pregnant by one of her many violators. I asked her what we could possibly do. 'Justice,' she said, 'safety, and a future for my daughter.' In that moment, I decided that was what I would fight for."

And fight she did, in 2010 establishing GREAT (Gender Rights & Equality Action Trust), which is raising awareness of gender issues in Africa and helping to create a women's center in Senegal. Frostrup is among those we honor in "The Trailblazers," our feature about individuals making a difference (see page 99).

It happened more gently yet just as memorably for our cover girl, Drew Barrymore, whom we spotlight because of her work and contributions on behalf of impoverished children in rural Kenya. Barrymore confesses that she had serious misgivings about her ability—or anyone's, really—to move the proverbial mountain. When she traveled to places of need to

see if there was a way she could help, at first she felt like "this Westerner living in a bubble . . . like a voyeur, an outsider." Simply writing a check can be problematic, too: One doesn't feel confident, she points out, "about sending money into the void of a charity." Then she took a trip to Kenya, visiting a day-care center in Kibera, a Nairobi slum, where a six-year-old girl named Edith took her hand and held on to it. "She was so unguarded," Barrymore recalls, "I started feeling, okay, let's hold hands and we can do this together. That was my gateway."

On the spectrum of that now ubiquitous yet nevertheless undilutedly powerful concept of "global citizenship," most of us are nowhere near the likes of a Frostrup or Barrymore. While some of us routinely sign up these days for voluntourism trips—teaching English in Cambodia, helping to count coral species in the Caribbean, and so on—most of us, let's face it, cherish the downtime travel represents. In a recent poll of our readers, 6 percent said that more than two days was an ideal length of time to volunteer while on vacation, but 44 percent thought a half-day would be quite sufficient, thank you. (For more poll results, see the following page.) We may also not all believe as fully or as urgently as, say, Sonu Shivdasani, CEO of Six Senses Resorts & Spas, that we have



PHOTOGRAPH BY REBECCA LACORRE

TRUTH IN TRAVEL Travel publications often accept free travel and accommodations. Condé Nast Traveler does not. We are independent of the travel industry. We always pay our way, and, as far as possible, our correspondents travel anonymously. By doing so, they experience the world the way you do—good and bad—and their reports and recommendations are fair, impartial, and authoritative.

nine years tops to change our fossil fuel-burning, carbon-emitting ways before global warming becomes irreversible and its ultimately catastrophic consequences start to unfold (for details of what Shivasani is attempting to accomplish environmentally at his little gem of a resort in the Maldives, Soneva Fushi, see "Paradise Without the Perrier," page 140). And only an infinitesimal fraction of us have the wherewithal of the eco-radical super-rich who see it as their personal mission to buy up pristine tracts of wilderness and, in a last-ditch effort to save us from ourselves, create what are in essence earth-bound Noah's arks of biological diversity—although you can certainly enjoy the publicly accessible fruits of their labors (see *The Informer*, page 51).

But neither does that mean—and our poll results bear this out—that we are largely impervious to the world's environmental perils or social injustices. One easy way to ensure you are contributing to positive change is to give your travel dollars to companies that, like Shivasani's, are trying to do the right thing. In doing so, you can eat your cake and have it too: luxuriate on your holiday, yet feel all the more relaxed and at peace in the knowledge that the money you are spending—that you would spend anyway—is helping to support worthy acts of global citizenship: empowering impoverished communities economically, promoting health and education, protecting the local culture and environment, conserving wildlife, and more.

IT IS WITH THIS IN MIND that we publish in this issue our fifth annual World Savers Awards list of hotels, resorts, airlines, cruise lines, and tour operators who have initiatives in all or some combination of these areas of need (see page 85). The companies featured there—as well as those we give call-outs to in the pages of our feature stories—impressed the editors of this magazine and a roster of other judges with their visionary programs. Consider them—plus our World Savers Hall of Fame, the list of previous years' winners and runners-up whose social and/or environmental commitments are only growing stronger (see cntraveler.com/worldsavers)—your peace-of-mind-guaranteed travel shopping catalog.

We have dedicated this issue to "Visionaries," both individuals and companies. But we know we can't all blaze new trails alone; it's also okay to be followers. Here's to knowing that at least we're traveling on the right path.

Klara Glowczewska

KLARA GLOWCZEWSKA
EDITOR IN CHIEF

READERS' POLL

Giving Back

We asked you what matters

58% OF YOU SAID YOUR CHOICE OF HOTEL IS INFLUENCED BY THE SUPPORT IT GIVES TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY.



WHAT SHOULD HOTELS DO TO PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT?



82% OF YOU PREFER SHEETS CHANGED NOT DAILY, BUT TWICE A WEEK—TO CONSERVE WATER.

86% OF YOU WOULD LIKE HOTELS TO EXPLAIN HOW THEY'RE CONTRIBUTING TO THE COMMUNITY AND PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT.

80% OF YOU WOULD LIKE AIRLINES TO DO THE SAME.

The percentage of you who think travel companies should be responsible for protecting the environment.



PHOTOGRAPH BY TESSA DE BECOEN

The findings of a poll conducted by Condé Nast Traveler earlier this year prompted a number of travel companies we partnered with in the **Sustainable Travel Leadership Network (STLN)** to take specific measures to address the findings. Some highlights: **Royal Caribbean** launched a free onboard educational program to explain the exact steps it is taking to maximize its ship's efficiency. **Abercrombie & Kent** increased communication with its guests about its community projects and invites guests to visit them. And **Finnair**, which flew the longest commercial biofuel flight in July, from Amsterdam to Helsinki, has launched a Web site to inform travelers of its corporate social responsibility efforts (see finnaigroup.com/responsibility/index.html).