HELPING HANDS

These people make a business out

of making a difference. Most of the challenges require significant

dedication to fundraising before you travel, but a few new programs

simply include a charitable donation

within the cost of the tour. Choose

from more than 25 charities for your

www.intrepidchallenges.com

Teaching English as a foreign language is just the start of the

volunteering adventures. Wildlife

and lions. On the softer side of

options also include pandas, turtles

charity you can join the humanitarian

tours that include a short period of

Teams are scheduled all year round

Cambodia, Fiji and Mongolia. When

you register, part of the tour cost

goes towards helping finance the

towards your accommodation and

construction and part of it goes

volunteer work before carrying on

ph: 9597 0210

with the tour.

www.i-to-i.com

ph: 1300 881 590

www.habitat.org.au

ph: (02) 9635 0199

**Habitat for Humanity** 

to travel to places such as

**Intrepid Challenges** 

Long march: trek along China's Great Wall and attract sponsorship for your chosen cause.



**New homes:** Cambodian children are intrigued by foreigners who come to help.

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INCLUDES Return airfare PLUS 4 nights accommodation with broakfact dails.

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up to one month after you return from your holiday, and we will give you a \$100 voucher per booking (not specifically be person travelling) for use towards your next holiday package. Issue of the voucher is not an admission of liability. We reserve the right to withdraw this offer at any time.\*Travel restrictions & conditions apply, Please ask us for further details. Prices & taxes are correct as at 31 Dec 07 & are subject to change without notice. Prices are per person & are subject to availability. Accom (if included) is based on twin share unless otherwise stated. Seasonal surcharges may apply depending on date of travel. Additional levies government charges & other applicable fees may apply & are beyond our control. Additional taxes specific to your flight routing may apply (where airfare is included), Payments made by credit card will incur a surcharge. Service charges from \$10 per one way domestic airfare & \$15 per one way Trans-Tasman airfare apply to in-store & telephone bookings. Booking fee of \$15.95 applies to domestic airfare online bookings. FROM MELBOURNE. Lic. No. 31089. Flight Centre Limited trading as Escape Travel.

## Make a world of difference



Promised to help change the world in 2008? Ewen Bell

has some suggestions on

how to do it travelling

F YOUR New Year's resolution involved giving a little good fortune back to the world, you've come to the right place.

Travel does this on many levels, but you can go one step further and choose a travel experience designed to bring charity to the people you visit.

What drives people to get involved with charity tours is the desire to make a difference to the world. A bonus is getting out and seeing some of it.

Melbourne-based company Intrepid Challenges provides a bridge between adventure-seekers and recognised charities, bringing the two together and operating challenge groups

By signing up for the physical challenge of trekking along the Great Wall of China or cycling across Vietnam, you can attract sponsorship and donations to support your chosen cause.

Mike Howell has been organising charity challenge events for Intrepid for more than four years.

He left behind a career in finance and now helps hundreds of others get out from behind their desk every year.

"It's fantastic to explore the wilds of China on a bicycle with a group of likeminded people, but it's even better when you know that as a group you've raised \$100,000 for Oxfam Australia," he says.

Participants are given advice on how to plan their fundraising activities — and it's not an easy path.

A lot of work goes into hosting events and rattling the tin, but the proceeds from such challenges form a critical part of fundraising for many charities — such as Guide Dogs Victoria, Cancer Council Victoria and MS Australia.

The whole point of a charity challenge is to push yourself beyond your current limits. Discovering you can achieve more than you realised is a recurring theme.

Kirrily Graham rode from Hanoi to Ho Chi Minh City and says: "I actually didn't know I could cycle 100km in one day. With the right preparation I guess you can do anything

It's a similar story for volunteers who help Habitat for Humanity build houses in Asia and the Pacific.

You don't need specific skills, but everyone goes home with new abilities.

The Global Village program operated by Habitat for Humanity gathers teams in Australia to lend their time and effort to help build houses in places such as Cambodia and Fiji. Under the guidance of experienced locals, your hands can become n effective part of erecting brick walls tiling roofs and mixing cement.

Habitat specialises in helping families in the transition from poverty to home ownership. The new owners not only repay side with volunteers. Extended family members help, either on the construction or by preparing drinks and fruit for a break.

Success on these projects is not only measured by how many houses are built each year but also by the depth of inspiration given to families when a team of Australians arrives to help. You're not iust building a house.

Most of the recipients of support through Habitat for Humanity are in (TEFL). communities outside the realm of government assistance, people who previously regarded themselves as forgotten.





(above) volunteers and locals build together in Sri Lanka.

> Grateful: (left) holiday visitors find a warm welcome when they arrive to

When the hard work is over on the classroom and book a guesthouse to Before the 2004 tsunami, the turtle adds a short tour of the host country before those taking part return home.

dia's Angkor Wat seems doubly impresthe cost of materials but also work side by sive when you have laid a few bricks of no package tour could ever do.

> OR an even deeper cultural immersion you can choose a volunteer program for a month or so instead of one or two weeks.

In addition to cultural tours and community projects, the UK-based company volunteers. I-to-I offers a range of opportunities to teach English as a foreign language

teaching project, they provide an online rescues turtle eggs and helps hatchlings TEFL course to prepare you for the venture safely into the ocean.

a Kathmandu monastery is not your The magnificent stonework of Cambo- everyday holiday, but it will enrich your away the tourists as well. understanding of Nepalese culture in ways

> Volunteers are provided with two meals daily and accommodation in Kathmandu.

Given the amount of time the monks spend in prayer each day, you can also expect to have plenty of free time to explore other aspects of daily life in an impact on your life, too. Kathmandu, or get to know your fellow

One alternative to teaching monks to speak English is teaching turtles to swim. The southwest coast of Sri Lanka is Once you register for a volunteer home to the Kosgoda Turtle Project, which

Spending four weeks teaching monks in program funded. The tsunami destroyed much of the project facilities and took

> The I-to-I volunteers who journey to Kosgoda help monitor the local nesting sites and nurture some of the hatchlings in turtle tanks so they get a good start in life.

Collecting turtle eggs in the middle of the night and then releasing the baby turtles a few weeks later is likely to have

You become aware of your ability to make a difference and how a little effort on your part can make the world a better place.

To paraphrase a Buddhist parable, you may not be able to save every turtle on the beach, but it makes a real difference to that particular turtle when you return him safely to the ocean.

