

Impact First Investments Announces Investment in GivingWay

GivingWay invented a smart way to connect between travelers wishing to volunteer and non-profit organizations

Herzliya Pituach, Israel: **July 2017** – Impact First Investments (IFI) announced an investment in [GivingWay](#), an Israeli social impact tech startup which is utilizing the hottest international travel trends to support social and environmental causes across the globe. The platform acts as an online marketplace that directly connects international travelers and nonprofit organizations worldwide, where both sides can directly interact with each other.

The travel industry is undergoing a massive disruption process, towards more authentic, immersive and culturally-enriching travel experiences. Volunteering while traveling abroad, *voluntourism*, is one of the fastest growing sectors of international tourism; however, today the industry is completely dominated by thousands of placement agents that are selling very expensive volunteer trips, where the majority of the fees go to the agents and not to the nonprofits or the local communities they serve. Furthermore, the services provided by these agents are often subpar for both sides of the market due to improper matching of volunteer skills with the actual needs of the local communities on the ground.

By building a space for volunteers and organizations to communicate directly, GivingWay allows full transparency and open communication, and both parties are able to find the best suitable and personal matches resulting in much more impact. By constructing a platform that's database is entirely transparent, users are able to browse at their leisure for the perfect volunteering experience, and nonprofits can benefit from direct access to potential volunteers. In addition, because all connection between volunteers and non-profits is done directly – proceeds go directly to the local communities themselves.

Founded in October 2015 by Orit Strauss, Alon Elish and Gigi Levy-Weiss , GivingWay was designed to build these connections and make volunteering abroad easy and accessible. With over 700 vetted nonprofits seeking volunteers in 80+ countries worldwide, GivingWay's inventory of volunteering opportunities by far exceeds that of any other platform in this field and makes it possible for anyone to find the right cause to support.

“Impact First's investment will permit us to continue on our upward path—to address the high demand of travelers who want to volunteer abroad, and to connect these *voluntourists* to the local communities themselves so that their contribution can be as effective and valuable as possible. Creating GivingWay came from understanding that this industry is full of good intentions yet it creates far too little impact,” said Orit Strauss, Founder and CEO of GivingWay. “We think it's great that people want to support worthwhile causes in the places they visit and we believe the best way to do this is by understanding what you as a volunteer have to offer and how this can be best used by the local community you are visiting. This can only be done when there is a fair and open exchange of information and resources.”

“GivingWay is a real example of moving “good” forward. The existence of an open and transparent platform to connect volunteers and organizations abroad, without the presence of agents or agent-fees, proves the fact that the use of technology in addressing social issues is only continuing to be more and more normalized,” said Cecile Bliliou, Founder and Managing Partner of Impact First. “The GivingWay marketplace is maximizing the possibilities of technology, and is designed to be available and accessible to all, providing services that no other competitor or agent is supplying. We are excited to continue our work with Orit and her team and bring this solution to grow the *Voluntourism* market.”

About Impact First:

Impact First Investments is the first Israeli impact venture capital fund with the trifold aim to bolster *Israeli technology*, to build *global social impact*, and to obtain *market-rate returns*. Impact investing is dynamic. It’s a web of enterprise, venture, and ingenuity with the goal to *do good and do well*. At Impact First, we capitalize on boldness.

Technology has the ability to both address challenges and scale solutions. We capitalize and advance this interest. We recognize this growing potential of doing good and doing well, and combined with experience in Israeli high tech, we have the ability to address global social challenges by supporting social tech startups.

Impact First Investments is a member of Pitango Community Ventures, with Chemi Peres as Chairman of the Advisory Board.

About GivingWay:

GivingWay was founded in October 2015 by Orit Strauss, Alon Elish and Gigi Levy-Weiss. Strauss is a commercial lawyer specializing in technology licensing and IP and is a past volunteer herself, having spent a year volunteering on the Thai-Burma border. Elish is a seasoned entrepreneur with more than 20 years of technical and product-related experience in the web and mobile space. Levy-Weiss, Managing Partner at Silicon Valley’s NFX Guild, is one of Israel’s leading tech professionals and angel investors. The company is based in Tel Aviv, Israel.