

To whom it may concern

April 18, 2013/RAL/BSU
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I am writing this letter in recommendation and acknowledgement of *Be The Local* Tours of Mumbai.

In April 2013, the Holcim Foundation for Sustainable Construction in collaboration with the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT Bombay) hosted a three-day conference with more than 300 international invitees. The participants were primarily world class architects, urban planners, economists, and representatives from politics and industry. On the second day of the conference the group was divided into four tours so as to explore distinct areas and issues that affect the city of Mumbai. Amongst these tours, one group of 80 participants spent an afternoon visiting Dharavi and investigating the social and economic conditions of this slum.

After an initial search of several tour companies, the Holcim Foundation and the responsables at ACC Cement (a Group company of Holcim Ltd) chose to work with *Be The Local* tours in Dharavi to facilitate this visit. Fahim Vora and Tauseef Siddiqui, the managers of *Be The Local*, impressed us with their own personal connection to Dharavi and their ability to build a tour program that addressed our needs and our conference theme. *Be The Local* managed all of our concerns regarding safety and security, they were able to provide a midpoint rest-stop where shade, washrooms and cool bottled water were provided, and they had “transport guides” who directed the coach drivers from the drop off location to the pick-up point in the center of the slum. Throughout all of our dealings with Fahim and Tauseef, they were always accommodating, friendly, and highly professional.

Despite the youth of the team of guides from *Be The Local*, all of the individual guides were excellent. I personally received many comments of feedback from our conference participants praising these young guides. From my own experience with the tours, the guides are personally engaged, they know the area and the people, and also show great pride in presenting the slum and its self-sustenance to outsiders.

In closing, I can attest that this Dharavi tour was reported by many of our participants as being a main highlight of our Mumbai conference. I know that *Be The Local* are very well experienced in providing tours for individuals, but I can now also report with full confidence that *Be The Local* can expertly deal with the complexity of large international groups as well. I do not hesitate in giving them my highest recommendation.

If a personal reference is required please do not hesitate in contacting me directly by e-mail.



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Sustainable Technology Manager