



LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE | ARCHITECTURE | ECOLOGE DESIGN | ECOTOURISM PLANNING | PHOTOGRAPHY

## **HITESH MEHTA FASLA FRIBA FAAK Associate AIA** **Indigenous Communities Bio - Dec 2021**

Hitesh Mehta is a multi-International award winning planner and designer with Awards in Landscape Architecture, Planning, Architecture, Urban Design, Creative Writing and Interior Design. Hitesh has over 34 years' experience, having worked and consulted in 65 countries on six continents. As one of the world's leaders in using landscape architecture as a tool to help alleviate indigenous community poverty and protecting endangered species, Hitesh is a visionary in his field. Because of his holistic approach in private practice, academia, public speaking and publishing, Hitesh is one of the most influential Landscape Architects in the less-developed parts of the world and has most probably, collaborated more with indigenous communities than any other Landscape Architect.

His main work is to help protect cultural heritage, endangered plant / animal species, alleviate poverty in indigenous communities via benefits from ecotourism, and through hands-on workshops, build capacity in local communities. He has worked with over thirty-five indigenous communities in five continents and is a recognized leader in the field of indigenous community empowerment through physical planning, having conducted gender-inclusive participatory workshops in over fifteen countries. Hitesh has been addressing in his work, between six-nine UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) and in 2015, Hitesh was the recipient of United Nations (UNEP/GFHS) "Outstanding Achievement Award" for his work with alleviating poverty and protecting sensitive ecosystems.

One of Hitesh's specializations is to help indigenous communities develop Ecolodges which have proven successful in helping financially benefit them and protect biodiversity at the same time. One of his ecolodges that is owned by the Koiyaki Maasai Community - Eagle View Camp, Kenya is the ONLY project in Africa that has been certified and published by the Landscape Architecture Foundation (USA) Landscape Performance Case Study series. Ecolodges are a great tool to promote ecological restoration, no-carbon development, and provide socio economic benefits to indigenous communities. He is considered by his peers as the world's leading authority, practitioner and researcher on sustainable tourism/ecotourism physical planning and both the landscape architectural and architectural aspects of ecolodges. In July 2006, National Geographic Adventure magazine identified Hitesh as one of five Sustainable Tourism Pioneers in the world mainly because of his Master Planning work to protect endangered habitat and alleviate human poverty.

He has worked on many projects where tourism is used to channel money from tourists to local communities - Madagascar, Western Uganda, Ivory Coast, Rwanda, DR Congo, Tanzania, Kenya, Nepal, Australia, Timor Leste and Colombia. As the designated Landscape Architect and Sustainable Tourism Physical Planner, Hitesh has provided Master and Site Plans to help create destinations that are low-impact and are a win-win-win - financially, environmentally and socially

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