

Business, Management and Poverty Reduction: A Role for Slum Tourism?

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This paper addresses the question of whether or not there could be a legitimate role in reducing extreme poverty and hunger for the mass tourist activity known as slum tourism. It describes the origins of both historical and contemporary slum tourism, and the views of critics and providers of the activity. Ethical issues, double standards among critics and academics, and guidelines for fair and responsible slum tourism are considered. The paper concludes that the activity should be considered as a viable way to help achieve the United Nations' first Millennium Development Goal of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger.

INTRODUCTION

For the past decade tourism-related agencies, organizations, and businesses have addressed the issue of poverty reduction. The purpose of this paper is to attempt to answer the question posed in its title, namely whether the tourist activity known as slum tourism can have a legitimate role in addressing the issue of poverty reduction by the wider business and management community.

Tourism and Poverty Reduction

In 2000, all 192 member states of the United Nations, and at least 23 international organizations, agreed on eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to be achieved by the year 2015. The first of these goals is "Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger," for which three targets and appropriate benchmarks were established. The targets are:

Target 1A: Halve the proportion of people living on less than \$1 a day

Target 1B: Achieve decent employment for women, men, and young people

Target 1C: Halve the proportion of people who suffer from hunger (MDG Monitor, 2007).

In this context, the tourism industries (Leiper, 2006, 2008) have been seen as productive activities that can bring economic, social, and cultural benefits. Recognition of the potential for using tourism as a poverty reduction (or alleviation) strategy stems for the growing recognition of its place as a key industry in many developing nations. The World Tourism Organization's (WTO) Declaration, "Harnessing Tourism for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)" (United Nations, 2000), urged nations to use tourism as an effective tool to alleviate poverty and to integrate it into their poverty reduction programs.

Ashley, Boyd, & Goodwin (2000) pointed out that, as a sector for economic growth that brings about poverty reduction, the tourism industries have several advantages:

The consumer comes to the destination, thereby providing opportunities for selling additional goods and services.

Tourism is an important opportunity to diversify local economies. It can develop in poor and marginal areas with few other export and diversification options. Remote areas particularly attract tourists because of their high cultural, wildlife and landscape value.

It offers labor-intensive and small-scale opportunities compared with other non-agricultural activities (Deloitte and Touche, 1999), employs a high proportion of women (UNED, 1999), and values natural resources and culture, which may feature among the few assets belonging to the poor (p. 1-2).

The role of tourism in combating poverty has even received royal endorsement. King Juan Carlos of Spain opened the 2008 *Feria Internacional de Turismo en España* (FITUR) (international tourist trade fair) with a plea to industry professionals to use tourism to help eradicate poverty: “Tourism is a driver of understanding between peoples. It is an effective instrument with which to eradicate poverty and to improve the legitimate aspirations and well-being of citizens” (*The Sydney Morning Herald*, 2008).

Contrasting Approaches: Pro-Poor Tourism and Poverty Tourism

Within tourism, however, two contrasting approaches to poverty exist – Pro-Poor Tourism (PPT) and Poverty Tourism.

Pro-Poor Tourism

Deloitte and Touche put forward the concept of PPT in a report (on sustainable tourism and poverty reduction) commissioned by Great Britain’s Department for International Development (DFID) (Goodwin, 2008). This report was the latest in a series of papers commissioned by DFID that addressed the issue of maximizing economic benefits of tourism through employment and micro-enterprise opportunities. It also discussed the negative economic, social, and environmental impacts of tourism, the minimization of which was necessary to maximizing net benefit. The Deloitte and Touche paper defined Pro-Poor Tourism as

Tourism that generates net benefits for the poor (benefits greater than costs). Strategies for pro-poor tourism focus specifically on unlocking opportunities for the poor within tourism, rather than on expanding the overall size of the sector – or “‘tilting’ not expanding the cake. (Bennett, Roe, & Ashley, 1999, p. ii).

In order both to clarify and to advance tourism’s contributions to poverty reduction, and with the aim of helping developing countries reduce poverty through tourism activities, the World Tourism Organization developed a special program called “Sustainable Tourism – Eliminating Poverty” (ST-EP) (World Tourism Organization, n.d.). It defined seven mechanisms found to be effective in channeling more development benefits towards the poor. The seven mechanisms range from employment of the poor in tourist companies, to the supply of goods and services to tourist businesses by the poor and direct sales of goods and services to visitors by the poor. Other mechanisms include the establishment of tourist enterprises by the poor, taxes on tourism incomes or profits with proceeds benefiting poverty reduction programs, voluntary giving by travel agencies and tourists, and investment in infrastructure stimulated by tourism.

PPT has achieved some successes in reducing poverty in developing countries such as The Gambia, Laos, Rwanda, and Vietnam, but it is still a developing approach to integrating the tourism industries into economic, social, and cultural development (Ashley & Goodwin, 2007).

Poverty Tourism

In contrast to the uncontroversial aims of PPT, however, is the controversial approach of Poverty Tourism, a tourist activity that has much older roots than PPT.

Ausland (2010b) (a former director of the Disaster Tracking Recovery Assistance Center or D-TRAC, founded in the aftermath of the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami) noted that critics often use the term “poverty tourism” disparagingly, whereas the alternative term used by those highlighting the positive aspects of poverty tourism is “development tourism.” Poverty tourism is a portmanteau term for some twenty different activities or travel types (see Ausland, 2010a; 2010b) that involve both distinct types of travelers and distinct purposes. Ausland’s (2010a, 2010b) taxonomy of poverty tourism describes three quite different “genus-level” travel types – education travel/learning, tourism/leisure, and volunteerism/labor – that each implies a distinct but not necessarily mutually exclusive purpose, namely learning, leisure, and labor, respectively. The distinction is useful as the primary travel motive informs the way the travel is designed and conducted. These forms of tourism are labeled as “voyeuristic,” in the more general sense of intrusions on the privacy of others and without any necessary implication of the sexual interest that is inherent in the strict meaning of “voyeurism” (for which, see Smith, 1976).

Slum Tourism

During the last decade of the 20th Century, a form of mass tourism emerged in the major cities of several developing countries involving visits to the most disadvantaged parts of the respective city – the slums. The United Nations Human Settlements Program (UN-HABITAT, 2003), the UN agency responsible for human settlements, noted that

Slums are a physical and spatial manifestation of urban poverty. People living in slums have little or no access to services such as water, sanitation, and solid waste collection. Most of the housing structures in slums are sub-standard and do not comply with local building codes. Often, slum dwellers lack legal ownership of the dwelling in which they reside or any other form of secure tenure. In addition, slums are often not recognized by public authorities as an integral part of the city.

Twenty-first century slums in the developing world exist for much the same reasons as their Industrial Revolution predecessors came into being in the now-developed countries. Rural migration to urban areas in search of work, and settlement in districts close to workplaces, resulted in the concomitant development of cheap, overcrowded housing, poor sanitation, and inadequate supplies of potable water, of sewerage and, later, of electricity (see, e.g., World Bank, 2009).

Ausland (2010b) classed slum tourism as part of leisure tourism. He noted that it includes several variants such as “slumdog tourism,” “poverty safaris,” and “ghetto tourism.” Poverty safaris are visits to places like the Millennium Villages in Rwanda, where tourists are asked not to offer food or water to villagers. Ghetto tours are all forms of entertainment that allow consumers to traffic in the inner city without leaving home. “Poverty porn” (also known as “development porn” and “famine porn”) is any type of media that exploits the conditions of the poor in order to generate the necessary sympathy for increasing charitable donations, support for a given cause, or just for selling newspapers. “Disaster tours” are travel to visit the scene of a natural disaster.

Marcelo Armstrong of Brazil is credited with initiating the current form of slum tourism. In 1992, he began taking tourists to Rocinha (Rio de Janeiro’s most well known *favela* or shantytown) (see Armstrong, n.d.). In the first decade of the 21st Century, the international popularity of films such as *City of God* (2002) (set in the favelas of Brazil), and the 2008 Academy Award-winning film *Slumdog Millionaire* (set in the Juhu slums of Mumbai), seemingly coincided with the growth of slum tourism in Brazil, India, Mexico, Africa and elsewhere.

These poverty tours or slum tours are offered on a relatively large scale in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro in Brazil and in the slums of India (such as Mumbai’s Dharavi slum). Tour operators also offer slum tours in the shantytowns of such African cities as Nairobi, Johannesburg, and Cape Town, and in the

towns of Asian cities like New Delhi and Jakarta. The target market for these slum tours primarily consists of international tourists. Rolfes (2010) stated that an estimated 40000 slum tourists visit Rocinha each year, and that around 300,000 visit the townships in Cape Town (p. 421). The township of Soweto has launched its own township tours “in an effort to attract local and international tourists, boost its economy, lighten the load of unemployment and prove to the world that there is more to [Soweto] than deprivation and violence” (Wine, Festival and Song, 2011).

The phenomenon of slum tourism has spread to new areas. In April 2010, a local tourism operator – Asian Trails – announced that it was going to organize tours every Wednesday of Klong Toey (Bangkok’s largest slum) and the Duang Prateep Foundation. The Klong Toey slum has existed for some 50 years and its inhabitants largely are rural migrants from northeast Thailand who came to Bangkok for job opportunities. The Duang Prateep Foundation primarily focuses on helping urban poor populations, with special emphases on community development and on giving the best possible opportunities to the area’s children. The Duang Prateep Foundation would use a donation of THB 250 (US\$8) per person (Citrinot, 2010).

Slum tours can even be arranged in Siem Reap in Cambodia (personal experience; see also Cambodia – the best trip of my life, 2009; Slumming it, 2009).

Slum tourism, like slums and poverty, is not limited to the developing world, however, and slum tours exist in such cities as Toronto (see Slums Unlimited, n.d.). The idea of ‘slumming’ has spread beyond visits to the slums of major cities. In Croatia, for example, tourists can go slumming in the Roma communities in Međimurje and, in Slovakia, tourists are offered a tour of ‘the typical Roma community’ (Matejčić, 2010).

The History of Slum Tourism

Slum tourism, however, is not a new form of tourism but the re-emergence of a form popular in Great Britain and the United States in the last two decades of the 19th century. Both vilified and celebrated, Victorian-era slum tourism fueled both prostitution and significant social welfare institutions (Koven, 2004; Ross, 2007). Although there are reports of tours of the infamous Five Points district of New York in the 1840s (see Dickens, 1842/2008; Sweeney, 2002), Koven (2004) noted,

According to the OED, “slumming” is “the visitation of slums, esp. for charitable purposes.” But it referred readers to the verb “to slum,” which it defined in several ways: “to go into, or frequent, slums for discreditable purposes; to saunter about, with a suspicion, perhaps, of immoral pursuits” and “to visit slums for charitable or philanthropic purposes, or out of curiosity, esp. as a fashionable pursuit” (p. 9).

The origins of slumming coincided with a late Victorian fixation that combined “philanthropy, social paranoia, and voyeuristic titillation” (Saint-Upéry, 2010), where “respectable middle-class Londoners would visit seedy neighborhoods such as Whitechapel or Shoreditch, while wealthy New Yorkers roamed The Bowery and the Lower East Side to see ‘how the other half lives’” (Saint-Upéry, 2010).

The impetus for the development of slum tours was an 1883 publication by Reverend Andrew Mearns, Secretary of the London Congregational Union. The publication, *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London: An Inquiry into the Condition of the Abject Poor* (Mearns, 1883), was actually written by W.G. Preston, a Congregational minister with experience both in famine relief and as a journalist, and was based on fieldwork by Mearns and Rev. James Munro (Mayor, 1967). Mearns’ book “gave birth to the fashionable amusement known as ‘slumming’” and “To this little book...may be attributed a revival of the interest taken by the better classes in the condition of the poor” (*The New York Times*, 1885). The editor of the London evening newspaper *Pall Mall Gazette*, W.T. Stead (described variously as an unscrupulous journalist and a moral crusader) promoted the book. Stead’s stories of squalid life mixed poverty with incest in London’s slums, and the outcry they attracted led to the establishment of a Royal Commission that recommended that the British Government should clear the slums and encourage low-cost housing in their place.

Newspaper reports such as those found in the *The New York Times* (1883; 1884; 1885) illustrate contemporary 19th century attitudes towards the slum tours of the time. Slum tours were described both as “a fashionable London mania” and as “the latest fashionable idiosyncrasy in London, that is, the visiting of the slums of the great city by parties of ladies and gentlemen for sightseeing.” Miss Mollie Hay, who previously had been slumming in both London and New York, toured the slums of Chicago with other members of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union and reported that the slums of Chicago were not as bad as those she had seen earlier but were “bad enough” (*The New York Times*, 1883). To slum tours, however, was attributed the fact that the rich noticed the suffering of the poor and that this in turn had led to many sanitary reforms (*The New York Times*, 1884).

The ‘slumming’ phenomenon peaked in the last decades of the 19th century, but never really disappeared during the 20th century, as evidenced by scenes in the film *My Man Godfrey* (La Cava, 1936) (starring Carole Lombard and William Powell). The film mixes comedy with Great Depression-era social and political comment as society people drop by New York’s main city dump (or “Hooverville”) on 10th Avenue near the East River to find “a forgotten man” (a 1936 term for victims of the economic slump), the last item they needed for their scavenger hunt (Katz, 2009; Solarz, n.d.).

Slum tourism also continued in certain parts of the world. For example, in South Africa, White South Africans visited the townships as early as the 1970s. In the 1980s “township tours” (that were initially organized to educate local government officials about how the Black African population lived) attracted increasing numbers of international anti-apartheid tourists (Ahluwalia, Nursery-Bray, & McEachern; 1997). In the early 1970s, too, passengers docking in Cape Town on the voyage from the United Kingdom to Australia could take bus tours that included both a beautiful colonial Cape Dutch house and estate on the one hand, and views of townships on the other (D.K. Briggs, personal communication, March 22, 2011).

Modern historians have acknowledged that 19th century slum tourism was “an indispensable method of gathering knowledge about urban poverty” (Koven, 2004, p. 5), and underlined how important direct experiences of urban slum conditions were in shaping late Victorian and early 20th century efforts at beneficence and betterment, as well as understandings of poverty and social welfare, gender relations, and sexuality.

Contemporary Slum Tourism: the Pros and Cons

Harold Goodwin, director of ICRT and one of the originators of Pro-Poor Tourism, notes that ignoring poverty will not make it go away and that

Tourism is one of the few ways that you or I are ever going to understand what poverty means. To just kind of turn a blind eye and pretend the poverty doesn’t exist seems to me a very denial of our humanity (quoted in Weiner, 2008).

Critics of twenty-first century slum tourism (and there are many) see slum tourism as controversial for two main reasons that have given rise to accusations that the tours are exploitative and imperialistic. The first reason is that private, for-profit companies, most of which do not put money back into the slums, run slum tours. The second reason is that slum tourism is said to be a voyeuristic and dehumanizing approach to travel in poor communities. Critics claim that it is an invasion of people’s privacy and a humiliating taking away of the dignity of the poor. They claim that slum tourism objectifies the poor and treats them like exhibits in a zoo as it displays the destitute lifestyles of slum residents to predominantly white, wealthy, Western tourists. Critics also see slum tourism as just another example of tourism operators finding of a new niche market to exploit.

In return, slum tour operators argue that they are trying to bring awareness (and in some cases cash) to the areas, to educate tourists about the reality of poverty and, especially, to dispel negative stereotypes surrounding slum residents. A small number of operators have even built schools or community centers in the slums. One example is Reality Tours and Travel, which runs tours of Dharavi, Mumbai’s largest slum. The company states that its purpose is to show that the slum is also “a place of enterprise, humor and non-

stop activity. By showing this enterprise and community spirit, we hope to try and help dispel the negative image that many people have about Dharavi and slums in Mumbai” (Reality Tours and Travel, n.d).

For its part, Reality Tours and Travel claims that this part of the company is not run for profitable purposes, and that the money from the tours goes to support the activities of the sister organization, Reality Gives, an NGO working in Dharavi in the area of education. Reality Gives runs a kindergarten and community centre, which are visited on the tour (Reality Tours and Travel, n.d.).

A nonprofit children’s charity, the Salaam Baalak Trust, offers visitors to New Delhi a slum tour of the area around the inner city of Paharganj and the New Delhi railway station where more than 2,000 street children live. The two-hour walks are chaperoned by former street children themselves, who know the routes and the necessary survival methods all too well. The “city tours,” as they are called, started in 2006, but the organization itself was founded in 1989 by the celebrated Indian filmmaker Mira Nair, director of the 1988 movie *Salaam Bombay* (a film about street life in India), to rehabilitate the street children who appeared in the film (see, Salaambalaaktrust, n.d.). The Trust helps children in Mumbai, Delhi and Bhubaneswar. The tours cost about US\$4.00, and the Trust uses the revenues to help fund basic medical care and schooling projects for the children (Scheffler, 2009).

A comment by Kennedy Odede (2010: A25), who grew up in Nairobi’s Kibera slum, written in an op-ed article for *The New York Times*, neatly sums up the two opposing sides:

Slum tourism turns poverty into entertainment, something that can be momentarily experienced and then escaped from. People think they’ve really “seen” something — and then go back to their lives and leave me, my family and my community right where we were before....To be fair, many foreigners come to the slums wanting to understand poverty, and they leave with what they believe is a better grasp of our desperately poor conditions. The expectation, among the visitors and the tour organizers, is that the experience may lead the tourists to action once they get home. But it’s just as likely that a tour will come to nothing. After all, looking at conditions like those in Kibera is overwhelming, and I imagine many visitors think that merely bearing witness to such poverty is enough.

Weiner (2008) reported that at least some of the tourists who have been on slum tours claimed the experience changed their lives. There is some evidence, too, that slum dwellers see the inclusion of slums on tourists’ itineraries as a positive development (see, e.g., Duarte, 2010). Freire-Medeiros (2008; 2009), the Brazilian sociologist who investigated Rocinha (Rio de Janeiro’s most-visited favela), reported that some 83 per cent of inhabitants interviewed saw the development in a positive light, though in individual interviews they tended to qualify their comments, showing both a range of opinions and a degree of ambivalence. She concluded that slum tourism helps to break the isolation of *favelados* (the locals), that slum visits are more than a passive experience for both *favelados* and their visitors, and that they can actually challenge stereotypes.

Fenzel, of the University of the West of England Business School, who investigated slum tourism in Brazilian favelas during the summer of 2010, noted that “there is evidence that the slum experience has perpetuated social motivation to do good and moreover has prompted political demands for greater social justice” (*ScienceDaily*, 2010). Butler (2010) discussed the “township tours” near Johannesburg and Cape Town during the past decade, and concluded “township tours are part of a larger post-apartheid project of re-imagining and remaking marginalized urban spaces.”

In some ways, therefore, contemporary slum tourism is similar to the travel technique developed by the French Situationists in the 1950s that they called *la d rive* or “the drift,” that is, an attempt at analysis of the totality of everyday life through the passive movement through space (Sadler, 1999). Guy Debord (1958/2006), the French philosopher and Situationist, urged people to follow their emotions and to look at urban situations in a radical new way. They should “drop their usual motives for movement and action, their relations, their work and leisure activities, and let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the

terrain and the encounters they find there” (Theory of the Dérive, second paragraph, first sentence). Situationists, as persons who walked the city in order to experience it in a form of anti-tourism, became the revolutionary versions of Baudelaire’s famous *flâneur* (Tester, 1994), and the person on the drift consciously attempted to suspend class allegiances for some time.

While it is undeniable that there is a negative side to slum tourism, the comments by Selinger and Outterson (2009), a philosopher and a law professor respectively, about criticisms of poverty tourism apply equally to critics of slum tourism – a subset of poverty tourism. They noted,

Since most of the criticisms of poverty tourism occur in journalistic contexts, the leading arguments espouse personal convictions that fall short of the criteria that typifies scholarly debate. Indeed, most of the contributors to poverty tourism discourse do not reconstruct opposing views charitably. Perpetuating one-sided polemics, they fail to satisfy the demands of communal justification. Furthermore, most contributors to poverty tourism discourse do not comment on whether other people already have advanced similar, if not identical, views.

Contemporary Slum Tourism and Double Standards

Slum tourism’s critics claim that it should have no place in the itinerary of the ethical tourist, largely because of what they term its voyeuristic nature. All tourism, however, is voyeuristic to some extent – a situation that is a major theme in the work of sociologist John Urry (2002). On this point, Weiner (2009) noted the double standard that exists among critics of poverty tourism:

Besides, are celebrity tours of Beverly Hills any less voyeuristic than slum tours of Mumbai? I realize the difference is one of wealth and power. The Hollywood celebrities have both, the slum dwellers neither. But the concept, the motivation, is the same. To peel off the veil of a world alien to us.

Is the dignity of the poor somehow more important than the dignity of the rich? It can be argued that celebrity-themed tours involving the rich and famous also objectify and treat their subjects like exhibits in a zoo as the tours display their affluent lifestyles. It is ironic that tours of British stately homes that actually include zoos (such as Woburn Safari Park at Woburn Abbey) are classed as heritage tourism (see Spring has sprung, 2011), but tours of long-lasting slums are not.

Is the dignity of the poor somehow more important than the dignity of the dead? Kendle (2008) classed poverty tourism as a form of dark tourism (also known as black tourism and grief tourism), which is “the act of travel and visitation to sites, attractions and exhibitions which have real or recreated death, suffering or the seemingly macabre as a main theme” (Joly, 2010, back cover). Contemporary slum tourism may have received its impetus from two slum-themed and internationally successful films in the past decade, but it is no more voyeuristic than movie-inspired “holocaust” or *Schindler’s List* tourism. Opponents of slum tourism say that “it is downright voyeuristic – people’s suffering should never be tourist attractions” (A short guide to slum tourism, 2011), but tours of places associated with people’s suffering abound. Apart from tours of concentration camps such as Auschwitz and Dachau, examples of movie-inspired tourism include various guided tours of Cracow and its environs to visit sites associated with the making of Steven Spielberg’s 1993 film *Schindler’s List* (see, e.g., Fast, 2003). Similarly, tours also are available of the town of Arezzo, in Tuscany, to locations where scenes from Roberto Benigni’s 1998 film *La Vita e Bella (Life Is Beautiful)* were filmed (see, e.g., Italy Heaven, n.d.) In a similar vein, the 1984 movie *The Killing Fields* aroused continuing interest in Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum and in Choeung Ek near Phnom Penh, where thousands of Cambodians were killed by the Khmer Rouge, and where their bones can still be seen (Istvan, 2003).

The issue of double standards also arises for academics. They describe slum tourism as unethical and voyeuristic, but they arrange study tours, and supervise field research, for students to slums (cf., Yarmuch, 2010) (see also Selinger and Outterson, 2009). For an example of such study tours, see the

three posts in 2005 by Malaysian communication students on Bangkok's Klong Toey slum – “Dwellers of Klong Toey” (2005), “Journey into Klong Toey Slum” (2005), and “Paving the way for future generations” (2005). See, too, the blogs by an academic from Iowa who has taken film students to the slums of Cavite and Las Piñas (Manila) and Kenya (Slum Documentary, 2009).

Freire-Medeiros (2008: 22) is one researcher who has pointed to the double standard in force among those sociologists and tourism researchers who investigate contemporary slums and slum-dwellers:

How can I not pre-judge tourists and guides, how can I establish a sympathetic relationship, without yielding to the voyeuristic urge that seems to animate them? Why accuse them of exploiting the favela when we, social scientists, have long used it as a field of experimentation for our intellect?

Responsible Slum Tourism

Selinger and Outterson (2009) stated, “While we do not defend all or even most poverty tourism practices, we do conclude that categorical condemnation of poverty tourism is unjustified.” It would be wrong, therefore, to ignore the economic benefits of slum tourism in poverty reduction. The crucial question, therefore, seems not to be whether slum tours should exist but rather how they should be conducted. Scheyvens (2001) proposed criteria for forms of travel to impoverished areas that adhere to the principles of alternative tourism. According to Holden (1984), alternative tourism is that “promotes a just form of travel between members of different communities. It seeks to achieve mutual understanding, solidarity and equality amongst participants” (p. 15). Scheyvens (2001) suggested:

Thus, in an ideal sense, poverty tourism means tourism to poor areas which is both ethical and equitable. It has the following attributes:

- builds solidarity between visitors and those visited;
- promotes mutual understanding and relationships based on equality, sharing and respect;
- supports the self-sufficiency and self-determination of local communities; and
- maximizes local economic, cultural and social benefits (, p. 18).

After reviewing a number of case studies, she concluded:

When conducted in an appropriate manner in accordance with the principles of alternative tourism, tours to poorer parts of the world can be beneficial to both tourists and residents. Undoubtedly, tourism to sites of poverty can be both voyeuristic and insensitive to local needs and interests. The critical issues are how poverty tourism is approached, who controls the subject matter and how much opportunity there is for interaction between tourists and local people (Scheyvens: 2001: 18).

Weiner (2009) proposed the following conditions for sound, responsible slum tourism:

Small is Beautiful. There's a big difference between a group of 50 tourists barreling through the slums on a tour bus and a group of five or six on foot. One is an invasion, the other is not.

No Photos, Please. Snapping photos is bound to raise suspicions among the slum inhabitants and, justifiably or not, give credence to charges of voyeurism. Leave the camera at the hotel.

Funnel Profits Back Into the Slums. The good slum-tour companies are already doing this, donating a portion of their profits to help build community centers, clinics and other worthwhile projects. They need to do more.

Soft Sell. Brochures and websites touting slum tours should not bundle them together with adventure tourism, as if the tours were some sort of cultural bungee jumping. The marketing should be low-key and respectful. (Original emphasis)

The implication of Scheyven's and Weiner's work is that a principled, relational approach to slum tourism that preserves human dignity is possible. Shah and Gupta (2000) noted that tourism that supports sustainable livelihoods and that aims to minimize the negative effects and to maximize the positive effects for local people complies with the principles of 'fair trade in tourism' (Shah and Gupta 2000). Fair trade in tourism is an aspect of sustainable tourism. It aims to maximize the benefits from tourism for local destination stakeholders through mutually beneficial and equitable partnerships between national and international tourism stakeholders. It also supports the right of indigenous host communities, whether involved in tourism or not, to participate as equal stakeholders and beneficiaries in the tourism development process (Guidelines and principles, n. d.).

CONCLUSION

This paper addressed the question of whether or not there is a legitimate place for slum tourism in attempts to eliminate or to reduce extreme poverty and hunger. Slum tourism is neither a new nor a recent phenomenon, having roots in Victorian Great Britain as a serious attempt to investigate the conditions of extreme poverty in the London slums of the time as well as an opportunity to mix and mingle with persons of different races and social classes. Although it had a low profile during the 20th century, slum tourism never completely disappeared and, after two films drew international attention to slums in the first decade of the 21st century, it re-emerged as a growing form of tourist activity. Contemporary slum tourism is voyeuristic, like its 19th century form, but no more voyeuristic than other forms of tourism (including both movie-inspired holocaust tourism and celebrity tourism) that do not attract the vituperative criticism which is an example of double standards practiced by academics, social reformers, and members of the general public.

There is both historical and contemporary evidence that slum tourism did and does bring economic benefits in terms of alleviating the effects of poverty, and that it sensitizes those who go on such tours to life in, and the reality of, the slums. There is also evidence that some slum dwellers welcome the benefits that slum tourism can bring.

Despite slum tourism's drawbacks, the answer to the question posed in this paper's title is that it does merit serious attention as a way to contribute to the Millennium Development Goal of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger. The challenge is to ensure that all slum tour operators adhere to guidelines that exist for principled, relational approaches to slum tourism that preserve human dignity, provide sustainable livelihoods, and minimize the negative effects and maximize the positive effects for local people. The wider business and management community also benefits from the spending of tourists in host countries. It can contribute to the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger by, among other activities, encouraging the supply of goods and services to tourist businesses by the poor, direct sales of goods and services to visitors by the poor, and by investing in the infrastructure stimulated by tourism.

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