

Material-based writing: Tourism

Your classmate took the picture below on her trip to India. When she told about her vacation in class, she was fiercely attacked by some students who consider her behavior to be irresponsible. That's why your teacher has come up with the following question: Do you think it is appropriate for wealthy travelers to visit slums as a tourist activity?

Comment on the issue in at least **300 words** using the source(s) provided.

Bild zu finden in der Fachabiturprüfung 2017, *Describing a picture: Travelling in Asia*, abrufbar unter www.mebis.bayern.de

- voyeurism, poverty as entertainment
- locals do not seem to mind, are curious themselves
- alternative: natives feel awkward, but smile politely

„Der Slum-Tourismus kann den Einwohnern der Armenviertel mehr politische und soziale Aufmerksamkeit verschaffen.“

<https://makronom.de/wie-der-slum-tourismus-bei-der-reduzierung-der-globalen-ungleichheit-helfen-kann-1622>

- helps to put the world's poor more into the political limelight
- might be helpful in the end to improve their situation

Approximate number* of slum tourists in 2017

Number*	Country
> 5 000	India, Namibia
> 50 000	Brasil
> 500 000	South Africa

*numbers are projected to increase annually
Quelle: eigene Darstellung

- examples for countries which are popular for slum tourism
- increasing trend

“Poverty tourism”, “favela tours”, “township tours” and “reality tours” are some of the terms used to name this controversial phenomenon, but they all describe the same practice: organized excursions to slums in e.g. India, Brazil and South Africa. Especially South Africa has been affected by this development, as more than 500.000 slum tourists travel to the poorest parts of Cape Town and Johannesburg every year. Intuitively, many feel uncomfortable with the idea of slum tourism. But is there a way that such tours could ever be ethical and help alleviate poverty?

Critics, of course, accuse the travel industry of turning poverty into entertainment. They blame tour agencies for being highly exploitative and promoting a distasteful and inhumane voyeurism turning travelers into hordes of picture-snapping tourists on safari. Thus, the basic human rights of the local residents to dignity and privacy are often thoughtlessly undermined. Touching people as well as entering houses or taking pictures without asking for permission should clearly be a no-go.

However, looking at the world through rose-tinted glasses and pretending that poverty doesn't exist is no solution. On the contrary, tourism is one of the few ways to help us understand what poverty actually means and to develop some political and social awareness. Staying in a 5-star luxury resort without leaving the premises will definitely not give you an idea of the authentic life and culture around you. The “favelas” in Brazil for example are commonly associated with drug trafficking and violence but they are also known for being places of great cultural expression.

In the end, visiting poor neighborhoods has the potential to create a win-win situation with tourists and locals benefitting alike. One first approach could be that tourists choose local tour operators who support social projects with funding from tourism. But most importantly, local people must have a say in tourist development as they can provide a better understanding on how these tours can affect their communities positively.

324 words