

The Impact of Cruise Ship Tourism

Expansion of the new generation of huge towering ocean cruise liners and prolific private luxury yachts, to the smaller river boat tours, the demand for water-borne tourism is high.

Concerns regarding the impact of cruise tourism have been raised. The concerns are valid, as are the issues and challenges to address them. Some cruise ship companies have already made significant positive changes towards developing a best practice approach.

Topics of concern include:

- Worker rights
- Passenger safety
- Human rights abuses
- Environmental damage and pollution

The overwhelming of small ports infrastructure, along with economic exploitation and bypassing of local businesses are repeatedly raised. Rising crime at destination ports and on board are recurrently reported.

What are the impacts of cruise ship tourism, particularly for local people?

Environmental impact

- Ship generators constantly running on dirty marine-grade diesel are a major source of air and noise pollution for local communities.
- Oil spills have devastating effects and are toxic to marine life.
- Dumping of raw or inadequately treated sewage containing harmful pathogens causing contamination to shellfish beds and fisheries.

Tangible economic and social benefits to local people in host destinations:

- Revenue generated by day tours and tourist opportunities may not enter the local economy.
- All-inclusive deals may discourage passengers from eating ashore and interacting with the local community and businesses.
- Ingredients and supplies are often carried with the cruise ship, when they should be sourced locally.

Health and safety of employees and passengers:

- Flag of Convenience [FOC] practices can avoid taxation, labour and environmental protection laws. A safe and fair working environment agreement may not be in place due to flag state labour laws and implementation.
- Crimes including sexual assault and rape occurring on ships are investigated by the country who has the jurisdiction to do so. This is determined by the flag state, location and maritime law. Very few crimes are brought to justice.

The Responsible Travel Group is working to explore and develop information resources on the impact of cruise ship tourism.

Please join our group — or visit our web site for more information: www.ISTM.org/responsibletravelgroup

References

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