To Protect and Preserve: Applying Best Practices from Sustainable Tourism and Heritage Tourism to Study Abroad
Machu Picchu in danger from too many tourists

'Lost City' no more, Machu Picchu feels the strain of booming tourism

Machu Picchu Under Threat From Pressures of Tourism

Tourist influx could destroy Machu Picchu

Will new limits on visiting Machu Picchu save Peru's most famous Inca citadel?

Machu Picchu’s trash problems piling up, says UN (VIDEO)
Save Florence from mass tourism! New campaign bids to reclaim city from its 16 million visitors and monitor the damage they cause

- Around 16 million tourists visit Florence - population 350,000, every year
- Officials worry the city's cultural significance has been radically altered

And as large franchises move in, local shopkeepers and artisans have moved out. And as many as 100,000 native Florentines have left the city to escape traffic and high property prices.

Italian hotspots struggling with 'too many tourists'

Florence Increasingly Spoilt by Loud Students?

"The No. 1 market in Florence is tourism and the second is the American college student," observed Bari Hochwald, who lives and teaches in Florence. "They are the dominant factors in the historic center of the city. Florentines don't live here, it doesn't belong to them anymore, and they're resentful of that and they should be."
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Positives</th>
<th>Negatives</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Development of intercultural skills (we hope)</td>
<td>Changes to the character of the neighborhoods and displacement of local people</td>
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<td>Integration of individuals from diverse backgrounds and cultures</td>
<td>Local culture used as a commodity</td>
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<td>Etiquette abroad</td>
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<td>Economic</td>
<td>Working with local organizations and staff does introduce additional</td>
<td>Redistribution of spending power in the community.</td>
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<td>economic resources to the community.</td>
<td>Expressions and perceptions of privilege. “Paying for an experience”.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environmental</td>
<td>Students gain an understanding of environmental challenges in a</td>
<td>Student presence may exceed the carrying capacity of a local ecosystem.</td>
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<td>particularly area and how the local community is addressing them.</td>
<td>Students often expect the maintain their same lifestyle.</td>
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<td>Study abroad programs tend to be drawn toward unique and fragile environments.</td>
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We must acknowledge that we are firmly entrenched in the local tourist economy and we are only tenants within the communities where we operate.

Tourism has both positive and negative impacts on the local economy.

If we want to operate programs that are truly ethical and sustainable, then we should not only look to IE for checks and balance.

Rather, we should consider outside perspectives from adjacent fields that share our goals.
Sustainable Tourism

Establishes a suitable balance between the environmental, economic and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development. Seeks to minimize its impact of the environment and local culture so that it will be available for future generations, while contributing to generate income, employment, and the conservation of local ecosystems.
Heritage Tourism

Traveling to experience the places, artifacts, and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present (heritage); including cultural, historical, and natural resources.

Historic preservation looks to preserve, conserve, restore, and protect buildings, objects, landscapes, or other artifacts of historic significance

World Heritage is in reference to heritage that “Outstanding Universal Value”, meaning, its important to everyone and represents the best, most significant, or unique of the world’s culture and environments

The National Trust for Historic Preservation provides 5 principles for successful and sustainable heritage tourism at sites.
5 Principles for Successful & Sustainable Heritage Tourism

- Find the Fit Between Community & Tourism
- Collaborate
- Enliven Site Interpretation
- Focus on Quality and Authenticity
- Preserve & Protect Resources
Find the Fit Between Community & Tourism

• Consider the impact of the number of students you are sending on a program.
• Program presence, accommodations, and frequency in a location might affect the local community and environment in different ways.

ISDSI Case Study: Overextending carrying capacity of remote village when short term program to a particular area peaked in interest
Collaborate

• Collaborate with providers that work with and support local, rural, and/or indigenous communities and businesses that operate sustainably and ethically.
• Strive to make the experience beneficial for both students and the host community.

ISDSI Case Study: Community based tourism. Letting communities have a say in their carrying capacity and visitor activities.
Focus on Quality and Authenticity

• Incorporate program activities that are strong fit both culturally and ethically without adding to the “disneyfication” or commodification of the culture.
• Restrict activities that might be popular but aren’t ethical and explain why they aren’t included.

ISDSI Case Study: Weaving lessons taught by local leaders and experts who are teaching their own community members
Enliven Site Interpretation

• Include the perspectives of local experts and community members.
• Encourage students to get outside of the American bubble through community engagement.
• Inform students of ongoing issues taking place at certain sites, and if possible, provide a way in which they can help.

ISDSI Case Study: Engagement and instruction by local experts about issues while seeking feedback from communities.
Preserve & Protect Resources

- Make students aware of the impact of their presence in a community.
- Always show respect while visiting the host community and places of importance.
- Discuss photo etiquette and the language used around social media posting.
- Recognize that some student requests can’t and shouldn’t be accommodated.

ISDSI Case Study: Thai food as culture vs. Western dietary preferences. Addressing vulnerable natural resources in a particular area.
Scenario 1: You manage a successful short-term program to Perugia, Italy that has run 7 years in a row. Each year the program fills to capacity and has a waitlist earning your institution consistent income. As the program has run numerous times before, it is overall a very seamless program to operate and promote. You recently heard in passing at a conference from an Italian faculty member that local community members in Perugia are very frustrated by the annual influx of students and feel as though their presence is altering community dynamics in a negative way.

Scenario 2: Your team is in the process of developing a new program to Salvador, Brazil. Many excited students and administrators have expressed interest in including a service learning component in a favela as a central component of the program. If managed responsibly this could be a very positive experience for both the favela community and students, so it is important for you and your team to put in time in order to make this an ethical program component.

With the 5 principles in mind, how would you approach and manage these challenges?
5 Take Aways

- Listen to local communities and work with partners who know about issues on the ground.
- Be willing to walk away from a program, site, organization, or activity that is having a negative impact even if it’s popular.
- Be willing to say “no” to preferential requests that could place a burden sites or communities.
- Inform students of their impact on the local community as a part of orientation and provide steps they can take to mitigate their impact.
- Look to different fields with similar goals for new ideas.
Questions