

WEBQUEST [BASIC LEVEL]

THEME ALLOCATED:	Protecting local communities
PARTNER ORGANISATION:	MROT
TITLE OF THE WEBQUEST:	Reduce your own travel impact and help combat overtourism

INTRODUCTION:

Terms such as 'overtourism' or 'tourismphobia' have been making headlines since 2016. WTO defined overtourism as *'the impact of tourism on a destination, or parts thereof, that excessively influences perceived quality of life of citizens and/or quality of visitor experiences in a negative way'*. Overtourism reflects challenges of managing growing tourism numbers into destinations or certain places of interest (like the Trevi Fountain in Rome or Las Ramblas in Barcelona) and the impacts both residents and tourists.



Tourists at the Trevi Fountain in Rome

How many tourists is too many isn't always easy to determine, but growing pressures on local resources, infrastructure, mobility and other facilities; deterioration of quality of life for residents; or irritation and annoyance with tourists indicate that a destination is suffering from overtourism. Residents experience more noise and waste, higher rents and housing shortages, overcrowded public transport, problems with parking, changes in their culture and loss of authenticity. Additionally, irresponsible or disrespectful behaviour of tourists contributes to the negative impacts and to the pressures on the local residents. In Rome, for example, some tourists had been jumping into the Trevi fountain and damaging it.

Every tourist, not only destination managers, can minimise these negative impacts. Promoting the knowledge of responsible tourist behaviour that takes into account his or her travel impacts is, therefore, important in protecting communities in destinations.

TASKS

You and a few friends are planning a trip to a very popular city that, has been quoted as one of the destinations with a significant overtourism problem, with the local residents actively opposing the growing number of tourists. You want to be a responsible traveller and minimise the impact of your visit by taking certain actions to do so, both by you and

by your friends. What would you have to think about before going on your trip? How would you assess the negative impacts you may cause?

In this WebQuest, you will be guided through three steps that will help you being a more responsible traveller and minimise your impact on local communities, helping address some of the problems associated with overtourism.

You hope that through this exercise you will be able to plan your next trip in a responsible way that will ultimately make it more enjoyable for both you and the local people of the visited destination.

Let's get started!

PROCESS

Step 1: What is overtourism and why it has been happening? How has it affected the destinations similar to the ones you are planning to visit?

As a first step, you will first need to conduct some research to gain a deeper insight on:

- why have destinations experienced overtourism?

- [Overtourism and its causes - Responsible Tourism Partnership](#)
- [Causes, solutions and examples of destinations with overtourism](#)

You may want to watch this short but powerful short documentary by Responsible Travel, exploring overtourism and featuring interviews with local residents and global experts.

- [Crowded Out – The Story of Overtourism](#)

In the other WEBQUEST on the topic of protecting local communities [ADVANCED], you can find many more examples of how various destinations have experienced overoturism and how they have responded to it. There are some interesting videos there too.

Step 2: What are the negative impacts of overtourism on local communities?

Now you know more about the causes and effects of overtourism on a destination and local people, read more on how the residents perceive the impacts. This will be important for you to understand how your visit contributes to the negative impacts, and as a result, to think how you can minimise them.

- This short conference paper: 'Understanding the impact of overtourism on residents' gives a good summary: [The Effects of Overtourism on City Residents](#) (p. 197-198)
- [Negative impacts of tourism – a perspective from a Barcelona resident](#)
- [Impact of overtourism on housing and the environment](#)

Step 3: How can tourists help minimise the impacts of their travel?

You should now research what you can do as a tourist to travel more responsibly, minimise your impact on local communities and help address some of the problems associated with overtourism.

- [10 tips how to be a respectful tourist and also help combat overtourism](#)
- [UNWTO Tips for a Responsible Traveller](#)
- [10 ways to be a responsible traveller](#)

- [Practical tips what you can do to reduce overtourism in Barcelona](#)

To prepare better for your trip, watch this [video](#) and read the short explanation of [Leave no Trace Seven Principles](#). While these principles provide guidance on the responsible behaviour outdoors, they can be applied to other places of travel. For example, 'Plan ahead and prepare', 'Dispose of waste properly', 'Respect wildlife' or 'Be considerate of other visitors'.

EVALUATION

Write down your thoughts on how you can minimise your impact and protect the local communities in the desired popular destination, thinking about the following questions:

1. Being aware of the impacts of overtourism in the city you want to visit, how much (and in what way) will this trip be different to your previous trips when you were not that aware of the impacts?
2. What will be the most difficult part to implement in practice?
3. Will this stop you from doing things you would have wanted to do?
4. Having considered your potential impacts, which ones were obvious ('common sense') and which ones you would have overlooked hadn't you done your own assessment?
5. How would you talk about these issues with your travel companions?
6. How do you think the more responsible changes you have made will impact the residents of the visited destination?

CONCLUSION

Congratulations! You have just completed a Webquest on a timely and very important topic. By familiarising yourself with the negative impacts of overtourism on the local communities, and understanding their perceptions on the topic that have led to the resentment towards tourists and many protests in several destination, you will understand more what NOT to do to avoid such conflict.

Being aware of the impacts of each trip, and knowing how to behave responsibly while travelling is important in protecting local communities by respecting their local culture, listening to their needs, avoiding conflict and creating harmony between visitors, the industry, local communities, and the environment. This will make your trip enjoyable for both you and for the residents of the destination you have visited.