

## Tourism potentiality applying ICTs in the local rural development of the San Pablo precinct, canton Valencia, Ecuador, 2022

Potencialidad turística aplicando las Tics en el desarrollo local rural del recinto San Pablo, cantón Valencia, Ecuador, 2022

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### ABSTRACT

The gradual development of tourism, based on the country's natural resource potential and historical and cultural characteristics, has made it an important economic sphere, both as a source of foreign exchange income and for its potential to stimulate other activities in the national economy. This article proposes the application of a methodology for the elaboration of local development strategies in underprivileged communities in the current context of globalization, but with the appropriate conditions to contribute to development by taking advantage of their endogenous resources. Taking as a methodological reference the strategic guidelines that are developed in order to achieve the proposed objectives from the identification of the vocation.

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JOURNAL OF BUSINESS  
and entrepreneurial  
**studies**

ISSN: 2576-0971



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Journal of Business and entrepreneurial  
July - September Vol. 6 - 4 - 2022  
<http://journalbusinesses.com/index.php/revista>  
e-ISSN: 2576-0971  
[journalbusinessentrepreneurial@gmail.com](mailto:journalbusinessentrepreneurial@gmail.com)  
Receipt: 15 July 2022  
Approval: 22 September 2022  
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Likewise, the results of each phase of the methodology applied in Recinto San Pablo are presented, where alternative tourism is proposed as a local development strategy through the design of a tourism product that would lead to improve the socioeconomic conditions of this rural community.

**Keywords:** Organization, management, development, organization, social networks, social networks

## RESUMEN

El desarrollo que gradualmente alcanza la actividad turística, en función del potencial de recursos naturales y las características histórico - culturales del país, la han convertido en una esfera importante de la economía, tanto por ser una fuente de ingresos en divisas como por sus posibilidades para dinamizar otras actividades de la economía nacional. Este artículo propone la aplicación de una metodología para la elaboración de estrategias de desarrollo local en comunidades poco favorecidas en el contexto actual de la globalización, pero con las condiciones propicias para coadyuvar el desarrollo desde el aprovechamiento de sus recursos endógenos. Tomando como referente metodológico los lineamientos estratégicos que se desarrollan en pro de alcanzar los objetivos propuestos desde la identificación de la vocación. Así mismo, se presentan los resultados de cada fase de la metodología aplicados en el Recinto San Pablo, donde se plantea el turismo alternativo como una estrategia de desarrollo local a través del diseño de un producto turístico que conduciría a mejorar las condiciones socioeconómicas de esta comunidad rural.

**Palabras clave:** Organización, gestión, desarrollo, ordenamiento, Redes sociales

## INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, developments with sustainability perspectives are booming due to a global environmental imperative that demands them. In the conditions in which the world finds itself today, with its overpopulation, environmental deterioration of water, soil, fauna, flora, atmosphere, etc., the trend of development and progress of mankind cannot continue on the same course as up to now. The planet has been showing by leaps and bounds the deterioration that we provide and has already reached a point where if we do not stop the wars, the indiscriminate use of chemicals that pollute water, soil and atmosphere, the disposal of waste materials, the indiscriminate consumption of non-renewable products, indiscriminate hunting and fishing, the lack of respect for ecosystems - and begin to rethink the way forward we run the imperative risk of extinction of life on earth.

In Ecuador, in the period 2016 - 2021 there is evidence of a significant decrease in tourist arrivals, accentuated by the health emergency caused by the pandemic. Thus, in 2017 the variation rate of tourist arrivals was 3.9%, in 2019 it was -1.6%, while in 2021 it is -59.6%. (Ministry of Tourism, 2021). The most visited natural areas according to the Ministry of Environment are the national parks with 39% and among these the most chosen is the Cotopaxi National Park with 25%. (Ministry of Environment, 2021), (INEC, 2020). In this context, in order to improve and boost tourism activity in Ecuador's natural areas, this program seeks to support virtual and augmented reality technology to attract a greater number of domestic and foreign tourists.

Tourism in Ecuador is considered one of the most important sources for the country as it is currently the third source of non-oil income for the Ecuadorian economy. Therefore, with the objective of increasing the source of income, the Ministry of Tourism has implemented five strategic pillars at the National level to turn Ecuador into a Tourism Power; the strategic pillars are focused on: i) security to generate trust; ii) quality to generate loyalty; iii) destinations and products to generate unique experience; iv) connectivity to generate efficiency; and finally v) promotion to generate demand. (Palma Utreras, 2021). Specifically to comply with the promotion strategy, Ecuador has invested large amounts of money with the objective of increasing the number of foreign tourists visiting the country; as an example we have the tourism promotion campaign ALL YOU NEED IS ECUADOR which emphasizes that no country in the world can say that it has everything like no other, and all in one place and as close as Ecuador has it. (Ministry of Tourism, 2014). For the positioning of the campaign, Ecuador was the first foreign country to promote itself as a tourist destination through a sporting event such as the "Super Bow 2015" with an investment of 3.8 million dollars in a 30-second commercial plus the cost of production that exceeds one million dollars. (globalvoice, 2015) (Alvear, 2016).

The notion of local development that is gaining ground in the field of development studies refers to a policy model that would make it possible to transform the living conditions of the population. In this sense, the notion of local development does not have a homogeneous theoretical body; on the contrary, there are different perspectives in the way of considering "the local". Currently, in a context where globalization tends to reduce autonomies and increase interdependencies, accelerating the interactivity between agents and territories, the role of "the local" as a starting point for development processes has been redefined. This perspective highlighted the territorial nature of development, pointing out that the processes of structural change take place in a territory that combines certain production relations, a socio-institutional fabric, its own history and culture. (Castellucci, 2008)

The planning of a new local development model transcends the design of strategies in accordance with the potential and needs of each community. In this sense, tourism appears as a strategic opportunity that favors regions with a wealth of natural and cultural resources that are attractive for tourism. Therefore, tourism is considered one

of the major drivers of economic development in a region, since it not only increases the flow of people, foreign exchange income and job creation, but also improves the infrastructure of airports, roads, bridges, electronic communication and networks necessary for the development of the tourist destination and society in general, thus allowing for greater interconnection and development between economic sectors.

**Figure 1.** Location of the San Pablo Campus



**Figure 2.** Bridge over the San Pablo River



## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The methodology used was a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, by means of methodological triangulation, with the aim of covering the greatest number of edges offered by the subject and developing it as broadly as possible. This was achieved

thanks to the combination of theoretical and empirical methods and their corresponding techniques. The following techniques were used as particular techniques for this research: document analysis, participant observation, in-depth interview, questionnaire, free-word association and SWOT situational analysis. All with the objective of achieving a global vision of the project and its characteristics in order to fully comply with the research objectives. The research is scientifically novel and of great importance since it constitutes the case study, from the sociological perspective, of a project with unique characteristics in the sector, which has not been studied with scientific rigor before, thus linking technology to promote sustainable local development. It also manages to link itself to the tourism sector, enriching its offer in the city and promoting local development with this link.

### **Data collection.**

The research was guided by a continuous process to facilitate the researcher's decision making and choices, achieving an integral development driven by a logical path.

**Documentary Review and Analysis:** It is based on certain theoretical assumptions related to development, sustainable development, tourism, sustainable tourism and local development, including sociological currents of thought related to the following topics (Folgueira De Armas, 2011).. Several documents of sociological profile are taken into account, related to environmental issues and their context, in addition to the laws of Environmental Recognition, writings on the environment and legislation of the Ministry of Tourism.

**Participant observation:** Scientific observation is conscious, it is oriented towards a specific purpose or objective, it is systematic. It is carried out at various times during the research with the objective of diagnosing weaknesses and strengths of the tourism practice. (López Guerra, 2009)

**In-depth interview:** The interview is a skill that solicits information to obtain data on a given problem. The in-depth interview establishes a list of topics, in relation to which the interview is focused, leaving it to the free direction of the interviewer, who may probe reasons and motives, help to establish a certain factor, etc., but without being subject to a formalized structure beforehand. (Jiménez, 2014).

**Sample selection:** The sample is usually defined as a subgroup of the population. To select it, the characteristics of the population must be delimited. The sample goes from the general to the most particular, responds to a process of representativeness and allows or makes it possible to generalize the results with respect to the universe (Manuel, 2017).

## Data analysis

These are the results of the interviews conducted with the residents of Recinto San Pablo, canton Valencia. The interviewees have lived in the community for approximately 15 to 20 years.

## RESULTS

100% of those interviewed stated that the San Pablo no Pablo site exploits its natural resources to attract tourists, so according to the responses received, the natural resources of the site are potential tourism products to make known to the community, those interviewed stated that the San Pablo no Pablo site has not received visits from the canton authorities with proposals for the implementation of modern tourism projects, so there is a total lack of interest in the site. The San Pablo no Pablo site does not frequently receive tourists to enjoy its natural resources, so it is not attractive and there is the possibility of a lack of knowledge about the location of the place. The interviewees stated that it is necessary to provide the site with technological programs, facilities and infrastructure for tourism activities because in this way the natural resources could be exploited responsibly, boost the economy of the inhabitants and additionally they would become familiar with the technological resources that are used in the site.

Strong tourism competition, improvement in the quality of competing destinations, geopolitical stability in competitive areas are some of the challenges facing the tourism sector, which necessarily require a sustainable environmental perspective.

All indications are that tourism will grow to become a significant aspect of economic and social development in many countries. The challenge is to ensure that growth can be accommodated within a sustainable structure.

One of the great allies to achieve this purpose are the Information and Communication Technologies, widely known as ICT. These techniques and processes are responsible for creating new ways of communicating through technological and communicational tools.

In simpler terms, ICTs provide greater access to information, enabling people to interact, for example, regardless of distance: to hear or see situations occurring elsewhere and to carry out 'new normal' activities such as working remotely, having a virtual medical consultation or taking a workshop remotely.

The applications of ICTs in tourism contribute to the information of each place in our canton, and it is here where tourism can be promoted in the San Pablo area since modern facilities and infrastructure can be created that will allow the community and the general public to carry out tourist and sports activities, thus reducing leisure and addictions. In addition, it encourages young people to learn about other forms of economic growth and ways to exploit natural resources in a responsible manner.

It could be said that tourism depends, to a large extent, on ICTs or many of their useful features such as instantaneousness, interconnectedness, interactivity, innovation, immateriality, reach, among other attributes that have changed the way consumers plan and buy their vacations.

The application of sustainable tourism implies flexibility to adapt to market changes, the use of environmentally acceptable technologies and integration with the local development of the host communities -which will make profitability possible, but not at the expense of the resources and the natural and cultural heritage of the territory-, and according to a resource management model with a strategic perspective (Pardellas de Blas and Padín, 2004: 107-25). Sustainability is neither dogma nor a recipe for salvation, but neither should it be just a fashionable label. In the midst of the confusion that dominates the world, the idea of building a sustainable life requires elements of reflection, some sensible criteria on which to start working and a horizon of change towards which to walk as a human community.

## CONCLUSIONS

The management of internet coverage and the creation and approval of the site's social network accounts gives it greater possibilities of attracting national and international visitors or tourists and thus exploiting its tourism potential. Policies that promote local development are based on the possibility of generating synergies through the sum of wills and resources and the construction of agreements between local groups and organizations. The role played by the different local actors, both individual and collective, with respect to their level of participation and social solidarity, is of utmost importance in local development processes.

It is evident that the responsible exploitation of natural resources allows to dynamize the economy of the inhabitants, since they would also become familiar with the technological resources used in order to satisfy the needs of the community.

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