

Original article

Heritage management. An alternative for sustainable tourism development in rural mining communities



Gestión del patrimonio. Una alternativa para el desarrollo turístico sostenible en comunidades rurales mineras

Gestão de patrimônio. Uma alternativa para o desenvolvimento turístico sustentável em comunidades mineiras rurais

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ABSTRACT

Community tourism as a function of the development of rural communities is currently becoming a topic of great relevance. The present work, linked to the Innovation Project "Strategy to promote the heritage values of the Isabel María valley for the community development"; has as objective: to expose the results of the elaboration of a strategy for the promotion of the values of the cultural and natural heritage of the mining municipality. The Research-Action-Participation method was used together with other methods and techniques of social research, taking into account the respect for the cultural identity and customs of the inhabitants of the three proposed communities. The efficient implementation of the strategy requires the integration of the people who own this heritage, the cultural institutions and other social actors of the territory. It was necessary to analyze ways and

means to encourage the communities to manage, care for and conserve this heritage in order to achieve sustainable community development based on tourism.

Keywords: rural community; sustainable development; strategy; heritage; values.

RESUMEN

El turismo comunitario en función del desarrollo de las comunidades rurales, se convierte en la actualidad, en un tema de marcada relevancia. El presente trabajo, vinculado al Proyecto de Innovación "Estrategia para promocionar los valores patrimoniales del valle Isabel María para el desarrollo comunitario"; tiene como objetivo: exponer los resultados de la elaboración de una estrategia para la promoción de los valores del patrimonio cultural y natural del municipio minero. Se utilizó el método Investigación-Acción-Participación junto a otros métodos y técnicas de la investigación social, teniendo en cuenta el respeto a la identidad cultural y las costumbres de los habitantes de las tres comunidades propuestas. Para la implementación eficiente de la estrategia se precisa de la integración de los pobladores que poseen dicho patrimonio, las instituciones culturales y de otros actores sociales del territorio. Fue necesario, el análisis de las formas y vías para incentivar a las comunidades a gestionar, cuidar y conservar este patrimonio en función de lograr el desarrollo comunitario sostenible, a partir de la actividad turística.

Palabras clave: comunidad rural; desarrollo sostenible; estrategia; patrimonio; valores.

RESUMO

O turismo comunitário em função do desenvolvimento das comunidades rurais está se tornando atualmente uma questão de grande relevância. O presente trabalho, ligado ao Projeto Inovação "Estratégia de promoção dos valores patrimoniais do vale Isabel Maria para o desenvolvimento comunitário", visa apresentar os resultados da elaboração de uma estratégia para a promoção dos valores patrimoniais culturais e naturais do município mineiro. O método Pesquisa-Ação-Participação foi utilizado juntamente com outros métodos e técnicas de pesquisa social, levando em conta o respeito à identidade cultural e aos costumes dos habitantes das três comunidades propostas. A implementação eficiente da estratégia exige a integração das pessoas proprietárias do patrimônio,

das instituições culturais e de outros atores sociais do território. Foi necessário analisar as formas e meios de incentivar as comunidades a administrar, cuidar e conservar este patrimônio, a fim de alcançar um desenvolvimento comunitário sustentável baseado no turismo.

Palavras-chave: comunidade rural; desenvolvimento sustentável; estratégia; patrimônio; valores.

INTRODUCTION

There is currently an urgent need to reflect on approaches to rural community development in Latin America, justified by the constant changes in the international, regional and national scenarios that are having an impact on the development models of rural communities.

Today, the consequences of globalization, the increase in trade relations between countries with extensive technological development, the excessive flow of capital and the development of new information and communication technologies have rapidly transformed agricultural production and food marketing in Latin America.

This process has encouraged the countries of the region to design development strategies based on a new common model of regional integration, respecting cultural diversity and taking into account four fundamental dimensions: cultural, social, economic and environmental.

Starting in 2016, the government of the Minas de Matahambre municipality, the cultural entities of the municipality, the Provincial Heritage Center, and the University of Pinar del Rio initiated three research projects for the revitalization and safeguarding of the historical-cultural heritage of the mining municipality with the objective of contributing to the development of the locality, based on the management of its heritage resources.

The result of the three projects shows the possibility of interconnecting the three rural areas that have these resources, taking into account that, in the Integral Development Strategy of the municipality, two strategic lines related to cultural and natural heritage are defined in terms of the development of tourism activity in the territory.

In spite of working to promote the development of the territory based on the multiple values of the cultural and natural heritage that the municipality possesses, it has not been possible to promote management based on rural community development, which is why the following problem needs to be solved:

How to promote heritage management for sustainable tourism development in rural communities in Minas de Matahambre?

Taking into account the values of heritage for the development of tourism in rural communities, based on the knowledge of new cultures and experiences with the natural environment, it is appropriate to take advantage of this demand, without losing the sense of conservation and protection of the traditions they treasure.

This can be achieved by promoting sustainable tourism practices in communities that, although lacking technical preparation, have the potential to develop the activity. Such is the case of the rural communities of Pan de Azúcar, Sumidero and Valle Isabel María. These communities have tourism potential, especially for nature and cultural tourism.

In this sense, the main objective of the strategy is to promote heritage management and foster the development of sustainable tourism in three rural communities by interconnecting their resources.

The context of this research focuses on a case study of the three rural communities mentioned above. Their main offer corresponds to the realization of nature tourism activities and rural tourism; highlighting in them, natural resources, handicraft production, history and culture.

The current development models will take into account three fundamental elements: new forms of resource management that respect and conserve the environment; cultural diversity to achieve sustainable development; and democratic government systems that orient their policies towards improving the quality of life of the population, social, institutional and economic cohesion, and citizen participation in development projects.

In this current proposal for sustainable endogenous development, the State becomes the animator and the communities themselves become direct agents of change in a creative way; therefore, the social actors themselves are the subjects of their development.

The International Charter on Cultural Tourism (Icomos, 1999) in its broadest sense expresses:

"The natural and cultural heritage belongs to all peoples. Each of us has the right and the responsibility to understand, value and conserve its universal values. The concept of heritage is broad and includes both its natural and cultural environments. It encompasses landscapes, historic sites, sites and built environments, as well as biodiversity, diverse groups of objects, past and present traditions, knowledge and life experiences. It records and expresses long processes of historical evolution, constituting the essence of very diverse national, regional, local, indigenous identities and is an integral part of modern life. It is a dynamic point of reference and a positive instrument of growth and exchange. The collective memory and the peculiar cultural heritage of each community, locality is irreplaceable and an important basis for not only current but also future development".

Heritage has acquired great economic and social importance for the tourism sector, while at the same time generating new challenges for its conservation. Therefore, an adequate heritage management must emphasize sustainability. In this sense, the relevance and timeliness of the proposed work is justified.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Throughout the process, Participatory Action Research was used as a method of action, which objective was focused on the production of knowledge and useful actions, for a group of people with an active role of all those who participate on the one hand and on the other, so that they are empowered and enabled through the process of construction and use of their own knowledge, in which the research process is inextricably linked to the practical-transformative action.

On the other hand, this method favored the participation of the researchers jointly with the social actors, representatives of the entire community, achieving an active participation of the interested parties. It was used throughout the research, together with other methods and techniques such as: surveys, group work, interviews with heritage, tourism and communication experts.

Four training workshops were held by the Centro Provincial de Superación para la Cultura, with the participation of 45 inhabitants of the community, including presidents of Popular Councils, community

leaders and 12 cultural managers for community work in the municipality, on topics such as heritage and community development, tourism and development and the cultural dimension of development.

The interview with tourism and heritage experts in the province was essentially aimed at getting to know the considerations of these specialists on the real possibilities of the territory to develop tourism activities based on heritage management.

The group work provided very important questions for the research, referring to sociodemographic, socioeconomic and sociocultural aspects of the communities studied: Sumidero, Isabel María and Pan de Azúcar.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Reflections on the relationship between heritage, sustainable tourism and rural community development

The relationship between heritage and rural community development is not new, however, an approach to this problem warns of the need to make some reflections on the subject, with the intention of adjusting to the existing reality in Latin America in the 21st century. Therefore, we will start from the usual concepts of rural community development and sustainable tourism and heritage, after rethinking the system of links and relationships between them, based on cultural identity and heritage as factors that generate changes in the new paradigm of development.

The idea of analyzing this relationship arises from the understanding that the value systems, customs, beliefs, cultural identity patterns, ways of doing things, lifestyles, farming tools, rural constructions and artistic manifestations of a rural community are its heritage and the central axis of any effort for its future development.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco) has recognized the capacity of historical and cultural heritage as a resource for sustainable territorial development, emphasizing that the cultural heritage of a people comprises the works of its artists, architects, musicians, writers and scholars, as well as the anonymous creations of the popular soul and the set of values that give meaning to life. That is to say, the material and non-material works that express

the creativity of that people: language, rites, beliefs, historical sites and monuments, literature, works of art, and archives and libraries" (Lobelle Fernández, 2015, p. 384).

Interest in heritage resources transcends the academic perspective and reaches the governmental sphere. States, regions and municipalities show interest in the institutional endorsement of heritage assets in their territories; this for different purposes: conservation, awareness, tourist attraction, attraction of companies, employment generation or territorial development (Silva Pérez & Fernández Salinas, 2015, p. 183).

From another perspective, Montero (2014, p. 76) emphasizes "the capacity of heritage as a social resource, since its knowledge allows to boost the feeling of belonging to a community and strengthen the awareness of identity of the people in their territory. Hence the need to disseminate it and turn it into an educational resource of powerful transversal value".

The analysis of both criteria leads to the conclusion that there is a close relationship between culture, cultural identity and heritage, and the common element among them is that all three are part of the development process of a community. The true value of heritage is that it is recognized as valuable by the members of the community where it is inserted. This interconnection allows the inhabitants of the community to safeguard its capacity as a symbol and to transmit its values to its people.

Pastor (2003, p. 100) considers heritage to be a dynamic component within the pillars of community development, since it is the result of a cultural heritage built by the members of the community through a historical process. The manifestations of culture, through which we can get to know each other, include aspects as diverse as architecture, legends, farming tools, historical texts or those that tell us about current technology; also, music, poetry or clothing, as well as the knowledge of the way of producing.

The above indicates that cultural heritage cannot be left out of consideration in the choice of the community development model, especially if it is to generate changes in values that will positively influence the way in which the members of the rural community receive and socialize knowledge and experiences related to the model to be chosen.

Choosing the development model, considering culture, cultural identity and heritage means recognizing value systems, traditions and beliefs as dynamic components of the community and their

impact as a factor generating a change of attitude that ensures acceptance and understanding of the need for change.

The analysis carried out up to this point shows that the community is the scenario where a system of relations between culture, cultural identity and heritage is created. The concretion of the same, becomes a factor of orientation and hierarchization of a system of values that allow the members of the community, to interpret that development is by nature, the attention to the human being that has to be the beginning and the end of any effort for the community development.

The link between heritage, culture and tourism has been requested by different international organizations and institutions in recent years, emphasizing the possibilities offered by this connection as a development factor, including the construction of sustainable management models.

In 1992, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development was held in Rio de Janeiro, which was the first agreement to which countries were legally bound to establish standards for the design of sustainable tourism policies.

Later, in 1995, the Charter for Sustainable Tourism was signed in Lanzarote, Canary Islands, which proposes a tourism development aimed at the conservation of natural and cultural resources, advocating the recognition and support of the components of local cultural identity in the design and formulation of tourism strategies. This conference recognizes the contribution of the tourism sector to social, economic and political development, and also that it can be the cause of environmental degradation and the loss of identity of peoples, and therefore urges governments to draw up research projects on the subject, and the formulation of actions with sustainability criteria.

The cultural and natural heritage of peoples belongs to all its inhabitants and each one of us has the duty, the right and the responsibility to understand, value and conserve its universal values, as expressed by Icomos (1999) in the International Charter on Cultural Tourism, which develops a series of principles that seek an interrelation between heritage and tourism.

In 2015, the World Tourism Organization and Unesco drafted the Siem Reap Declaration, disseminating the values and respect for heritage sites and cultural expressions that tourists and the local population should have, based on the development of sustainable policies. In the same year,

the World Summit on Sustainable Tourism is held, which analyzes heritage conservation in relation to tourism, climate change, biodiversity and the importance of local communities.

Troitiño (2015, p. 396) expresses: it is no longer possible to understand heritage without placing it in its natural and territorial environment, as well as the cultural and historical dimensions of the landscape and territory, the incorporation of heritage into tourism requires coordination and complementarity of heritage, rural and tourism policies. Implementing appropriate mechanisms for consultation and negotiation, based on perfecting the design of development strategies where the tourism dimension is integrated into heritage management plans and the heritage dimension into tourism development strategies, where management infrastructures are created to guarantee institutional leadership, business consultation and social participation.

In conclusion, we must state that the analysis of sustainable tourism development based on natural heritage in rural communities in the mining municipality is a novel and relevant research, with broad repercussions on the environment, because the proposed communities are located in two protected areas where ecological rehabilitation can be promoted and which have the following characteristics.

- El Pesquero-Mesa-Gramales Mountain Range
 - Ecological value
 - Areas with landscape, flora and fauna potential
- Gramales-Cabeza-La Peña Range
 - Mangrove area
 - Wooded areas

In summary, the environmental dimension is a key element in achieving sustainability in the development of rural communities based on tourism activities.

Rural community development and participation

The community currently occupies a privileged place of national interest, which is based on the importance it gives to the individual and to the different social groups in the community environment; the potential of this space to respond to what today is called self-sustained and self-managed development.

The difficult situation faced by the country has led to the adoption of a survival and development strategy in which the local level has a significant role to play in the international situation and local communities have become the center of debate and reflection.

The complexity of the economic and social fabric demands, after six decades, deep political, economic and social transformations in all spheres of the country, and counts on professionals with a formation that allows them a scientific and integral interpretation of reality and, simultaneously, prepares them to coordinate, induce or suggest initiatives, projects or development programs, which produce the appropriate changes in the psychosocial and sociocultural sphere within the communities.

Terry (2011, p. 11) specifies that, more than a process aimed at improving the living conditions of the rural population, rural development is a model that seeks a dialectical interrelationship between the members of rural communities in order to improve their quality of life, enhancing national development.

When we evaluate the current scenario of rural development in Latin America, we can see that rural areas have been evolving, with a new territorial character, in the progressive development of non-traditional agricultural activities and non-agricultural activities in rural areas.

In view of the changes taking place in the rural world, it is necessary to establish rural development policies in Latin American countries aimed at human development, taking advantage of the human, physical, natural, social and cultural capital and the historical and archeological heritage of their communities.

The central idea is to focus our attention on the fact that rural community development is today a challenge, an effort for change in order to achieve notable transformations in the living conditions of the population that live in the countryside, in the economic, political and social structure. This presupposes an integral development strategy, where the benefits are direct for the inhabitants of rural communities. The following figure shows the relationship.

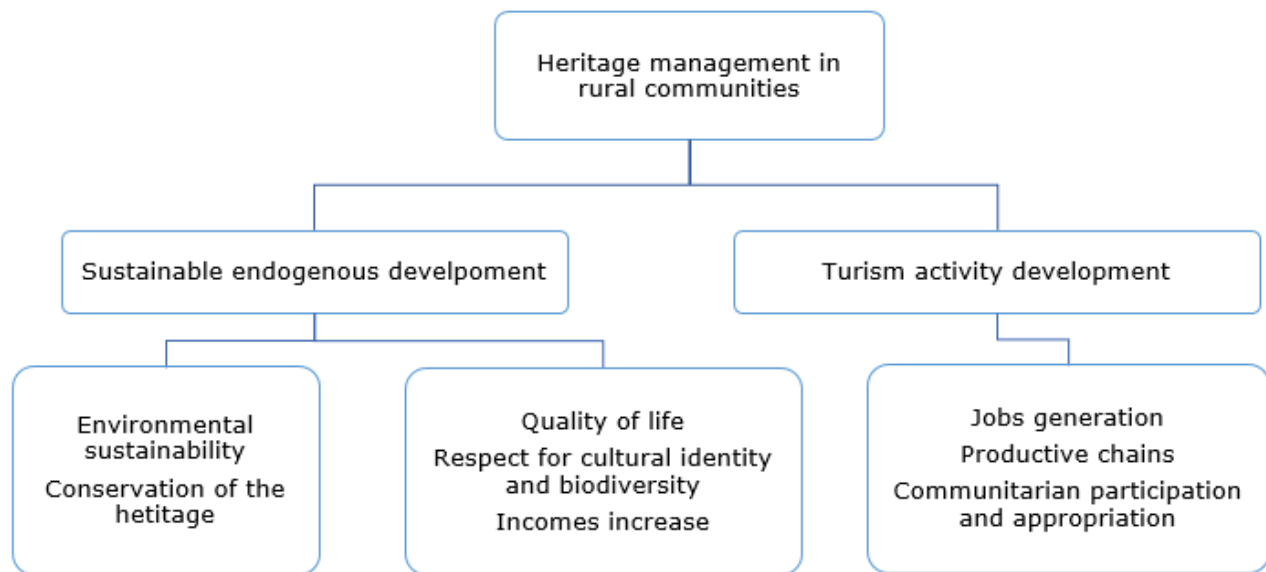


Fig. 1 - Participatory development management in rural communities

Source: Authors' elaboration based on Páez and Pérez (2018)

Tourism in rural areas

For the authors Casas et al. (2012, p. 93) it is in the work of Murphy (1985), where tourism in rural communities is presented for the first time. This author establishes the tourism-natural area relationship in developing countries with very evident poverty indexes. But, in agreement with other authors, this type of tourism can be considered very appropriate for developing countries, since it is an essential instrument for reducing the levels of poverty in economically depressed areas of the region and favoring the growth of their economies, while safeguarding their heritage, ethno-cultural and historical values and strengthening their identity.

The incorporation of tourism in rural communities is nowadays an important economic activity in the service sector:

- Human relations resulting from the cultural exchange between visitors and inhabitants of the rural communities; taking advantage of and enjoying the environment, natural, cultural and socio-productive values
- The generation of jobs, avoiding emigration to urban areas, making the inhabitants of the community the actors and protagonists of the tourist activity

- Inter-territorial and extra-territorial linkages are generated from the needs that arise from the development of tourism

Gascón (2009) cited by Kieffer (2018, p. 432), indicates that rural community-based tourism, is a type of tourism implemented and deployed in rural spaces where the local inhabitants organized collectively, play a participatory role in its progress, management and monitoring, seeking respect for the natural environment, socio-cultural and ancestral values of their community, allowing a pleasant, favorable and reciprocal enjoyment, of experiences between local people and visitors.

Tourism is an unquestionable factor of development and human exchange and has become one of the most important economic activities of the century. One of the most significant features of today's tourism industry is the growing interest in cultural and natural heritage, evidenced by the progressive number of destinations whose basic product is based on these values.

Considering the above, the authors affirm that tourism, if well planned, executed and evaluated, is definitely an instrument of development and requires the participation of several stakeholders, the main one being the community itself.

According to López Cordonez (2017) cited by the authors Parra Cárdenas et al. (2019, p. 10) rural community-based tourism is contextualized by the self-management and control of social and economic benefits realized directly by the community, valuing their ancestral traditions and cultures, as well as the natural resources of the environment, promoting pride in local identity, belonging and interculturality and under the sphere of public policies that support it.

In this way, community development takes on the necessary relevance to achieve the mobilization of people towards spaces that offer them the opportunity for unique and novel experiences to be in direct contact with the environment and the exchange with different cultures and customs.

The authors Parra Cárdenas et al. (2019, p. 18) consider that organized sustainable rural tourism constitutes an opportunity for communities to integrate tourism activity into the productive system. For this to happen, the environment, attractions and resources available to them must be analyzed and planning mechanisms established that are appropriate for the tourism potential of the area. It is necessary to unify public and private organizations and the communities of the sectors in order to propose and improve sustainable rural tourism development.

For the authors Paez and Perez (2018, p. 221) the territory at the local level is the support where tourism embraces the principles of sustainability. They consider that the locality is a space where the social actors of each locality exercise their power, cultural identities are forged and generate ecological potentialities. It is the place where sustainability and tourism activity converge.

For the authors, tourism is a dynamic sector that generates development, specifically rural tourism, also known as community-based tourism, which is aimed at promoting tourism activities with local participation, and whose demand is constantly growing as opposed to traditional tourism, establishing socioeconomic relations between various communities.

The following figure is a map of Minas de Matahambre locality, showing the communities to be studied: Sumidero, Isabel María and Pan de Azúcar.



Fig. 2 - Proposed rural communities in the municipality of Minas de Matahambre

Source: Own elaboration

Geomorphologic unit Pan de Azúcar community

The Pan de Azúcar community is a system of small intramountain valleys, located between the north coast and the mogotes of the Órganos Range, a karst landscape of great geographic beauty. On July 29, 1944, in a cave located at the base of the Pan de Azúcar Range, Dr. Antonio Núñez Jiménez and other expedition members discovered aboriginal human remains, as well as a stone mortar and other archaeological pieces. In early November 1949, Armando Rivas explored the Brea Cave in Pan de Azúcar. In the archeology room of the provincial museum of History, secondary burials that were discovered in the Jagüey Cave located within the limits of Pan de Azúcar can be appreciated.

The community has 578 inhabitants, the main economic base is agro livestock production (various crops, tobacco, pig breeding), forestry production in an area of 173.38 km² and handicraft production; this is one of the sources of income for the inhabitants of the community. Table 1 below shows the values present in the site.

Table 1 - Values present at the site

Geographic-natural	Archaeological	Anthropological and historical	Traditional folk culture
High degree of endemism of flora and fauna	Presence of 7 archaeological sites	Ruins of an old French coffee plantation dating from 1895	Traditional forms of tillage and cultivation
Existence of subway caverns and caves	Presence of Aboriginal Pictography	Ruins of a colonial cemetery and a slave crematorium	Production of handicrafts from vegetable fibers
Famous area in karst studies			Raising of domestic animals, agricultural and livestock activities.

Source: Own elaboration

Images of the resources are shown, based on the inventory resulting from the project for the revitalization of heritage values. In the area, in addition to the tourism modalities proposed,

adventure is one of the options, based on climbing practices by young amateurs and professors of the Polytechnic School of Agronomy.

Geomorphologic unit Isabel María valley

Isabel María is an intramountain valley, located northwest of the Órganos Range. It has 482 inhabitants, the natural characteristics combined with the history of the area, made it possible that in 1999 this valley was proposed as an extension of cultural landscape of Viñales National Park, a condition that is not granted because it is located in the area of the mining municipality.

The valley preserves the traditional culture of cultivating the land, the ancestral customs of its inhabitants and is part of the historic route taken by Generalissimo Antonio Maceo in his invasion of the west. The following are the attractions and values of the site (Table 2).

Table 2 - Values present at the site

Geographic-natural	Anthropological and historical	Traditional folk culture
High degree of endemism of flora and fauna	Ruins of an old Spanish fort dating back to 1890.	Traditional forms of tillage and cultivation
Existence of caves	Historical route of the War of Independence	Production of handicrafts from vegetable fibers
Combination and contrasts of karstic landscape and shales.		Raising of domestic animals, agricultural and livestock activities.
Viewpoints with excellent views	There are 3 viewpoints	

Source: authors' elaboration based on the Provincial Heritage Center

Geomorphologic unit Sumidero

The rural community of Sumidero is located in the southern portion of the municipality of Minas de Matahambre. It has an area of 159 km² and a population of 5625 inhabitants. The fundamental

economic base is agro livestock production (various crops, tobacco, pig raising) and forestry production.

The soils are fertile and are used by five Credit and Service Cooperatives and three Agricultural Production Cooperatives, as well as a Basic Cooperative Production Unit. The main access road is the road to Luis Lazo, which can be considered a work of engineering because of its location on the slopes of the mountainous group. The site's attractions and values are described below (Table 3).

Table 3 - Main tourist values and attractions

Geographic-natural	Archaeological	Anthropological and historical	Traditional folk culture
High degree of endemism of flora and fauna	Presence of 15 archaeological sites	Colonial site dating from 1830	Traditional forms of tillage and cultivation
Existence of a cavern system of caverns and subway caves	Sites of ancient slave shelters	Ruins of a colonial cemetery	Production of handicrafts from vegetable fibers
Famous area in karst studies			Raising of domestic animals, agricultural and livestock activities.

Source: Own elaboration

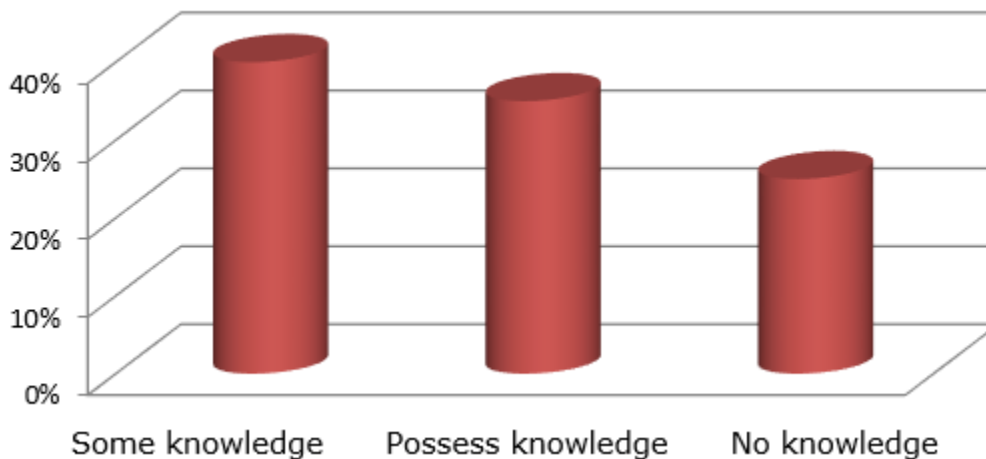
During the research, we worked to obtain results in four fundamental dimensions:

- Cultural
 - Defense of cultural identity and diversity
 - Revitalization and safeguarding of historical and cultural traditions
 - Design of tourist routes with heritage values
- Economic
 - Generation of economic activities and employment
 - Establishment of linkages between key economic sectors and tourism activities (agriculture, forestry and services)

- Social
 - Improvement of community living conditions
 - Community participation
 - Inclusion of gender issues
 - Capacity building through research and training on heritage and its values as an endogenous resource for development
- Institutional
 - Strengthening of local administration
 - Achievement of participation, negotiation and dialogue among participating institutions

According to Narváez et al. (2018) it is essential that the inhabitants of tourist areas have an active participation in the process of research, planning, management, conservation program and especially in the execution of the same, since the purpose of any development project is the improvement of the living conditions of the local community.

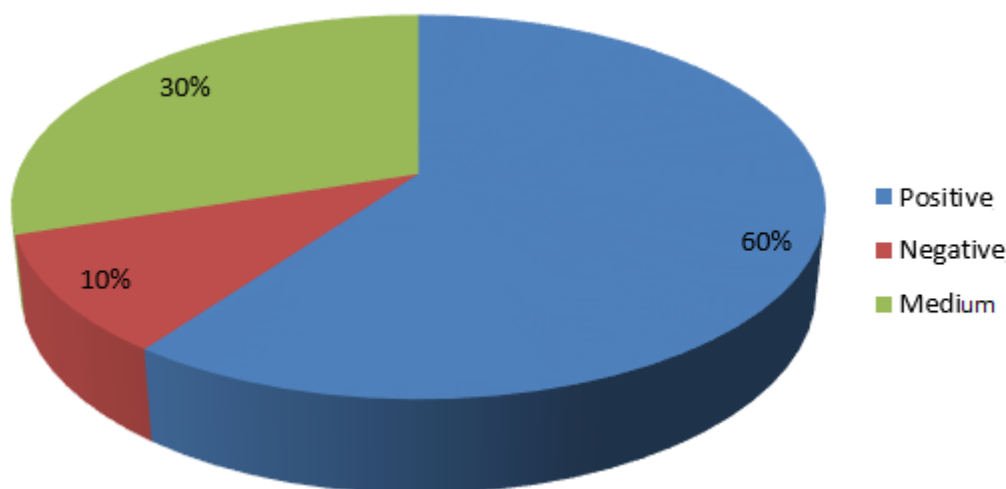
In the survey applied to collect data, the following information was obtained as shown in graphs 1 and 2.



Graph 1 - Knowledge of the population about the importance of heritage for the development of the community

Source: Authors' elaboration

The result shown in graph 1, is obtained from four training workshops carried out by the Centro Provincial de Superación para la Cultura, with the participation of 45 inhabitants of the community, including presidents of Popular Councils, community leaders and 12 cultural managers for community work in the municipality, on topics such as heritage and community development, tourism and development; and the cultural dimension of development, showing that 45% have knowledge about the importance of heritage for the development of their community.



Graph 2 - Possibilities for community development based on heritage management in relation to tourism activity
Source: Authors' elaboration

Graph 2 shows the results of the interview with tourism and heritage experts in the province, with blue showing a 60% favorable criterion with respect to the possibilities that the municipality has to develop tourism activities based on heritage management.

In the development of the research, sociodemographic, socioeconomic and sociocultural issues of the communities of Isabel María, Sumidero and Pan de Azúcar were analyzed, which are shown below:

- These are rural towns with a population of less than 2,000 inhabitants, which made it possible to involve a larger number of people in training and heritage education. However, the population of the Sumidero community has not achieved the expected results, even though there are isolated practices of community tourism

- In the 3 communities 90% of the families are engaged in agricultural production 40% tobacco production (planting, harvesting and processing in tobacco workshops)
- 30% to miscellaneous crop production and 20% to agroforestry production, and 10% to the service sector and mining production outside the communities

The analysis of the different authors taken as references and the results obtained, allowed us to provide some conclusions and suggestions to continue with the research and to give an impulse and incentive to the management of the heritage in Minas de Matahambre.

We must consider that this is a tool for sustainable tourism development in communities that have this potential and are able to compete with other attractions, articulating natural and cultural resources, history, identity and authenticity.

This proposal for heritage management as an alternative for rural community development constitutes an axis for achieving interconnection and productive linkages that favor local, territorial and national development. Since rural tourism is a territorial activity that is developed as part of a community activity, where a local tourism product is articulated, it requires the support of the government and all institutions, productive sectors, state and non-state services, research centers and educational institutions for its implementation in the first instance.

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Authors declare not to have any conflict of interest.

Authors' contribution:

Nelia María Páez Vives designed the study, analyzed the data and prepared the draft.

Iverilys Pérez Hernández was involved in the collection, analysis and interpretation of data and revision of the document.

Yahima Gómez Pozo participated in the documentary analysis providing data and updated bibliography.

Ivette del Pino Pérez participated in the application of statistical methods for data collection and instrument processing.

All the authors reviewed the writing of the manuscript and approve the version finally submitted.



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