

Mama Rumi ecological route and its tourism potential, for the community development of the Telimbela parish, Ecuador

Rolando Camacho, Fharab Hernández, Verónica Arcos*, Juan Pablo Torres, Germán Sánchez

Bolivar State University, Faculty of Administrative Sciences, Business Management and Computing, CP: 020150, Guaranda-Ecuador.

Correspondence: Verónica Arcos, Bolivar State University, Faculty of Administrative Sciences, Business Management and Computing, CP: 020150, Guaranda-Ecuador. Email: varcos @ ueb.edu.ec; isba @ doctor.upv.es

ABSTRACT

The route Mama Rumi, declared by the Municipal Gad of San José de Chimbo as an ecological and recreational route, has become an icon for the development of extreme sports such as Downhill, being recognized as one of the best routes in South America and also, lends itself to the promotion of tourism activities due to the great attractiveness of its ecosystem. In the present research, a situational diagnostic of the area was made, the tourist attractions were identified and strategies for the implementation of tourism activities were defined as added value for the strengthening of local capacities, for the development of the Telimbela parish of the canton San José de Chimbo.

Keywords: Mama Rumi, tourism, community development.

Introduction

The tourist potential developed by the ecological route called Mama Rumi, which means "Mama de piedra", named for the number of rocks, waterfalls and infinite beauty of the Pucará canyon, whose waters join with the Telimbela river, is the branch in the descent of the mountainous geographical slope. In 2016, according to the Municipal Ordinance of the canton Chimbo, it declares the 16.76 kilometers georeferenced that constitute the Mama Rumi route included the following coordinates and specifications: from the sector named Pucará Pl. X710843. Y9817130. Z 3032MSNM; until the junction of the Telimbela and Pilcopite P490 rivers. X702148 Y9815120 Z953MSNM; as an ecological and recreational route, destined to the tourist activity,

without prejudice to its eventual prolongation; promote the recognition of its natural, historical and scenic value; and, potentiate citizen participation in a conscious and sustained manner for the environmental recovery of the route. So it cannot be destroyed and will serve only for the practice of sports and tourism.

Extreme sport has boosted tourism in the canton San José de Chimbo, the story dates back to an Inca road of communication between the mountains and the coast to transport products, the years passed, but the route remains there. In the year 2010, it was opened for the practice of Downhill (descent in bicycle, mountain biking), it is one of the most extreme competitions, the route starts in the parish La Magdalena in the sector Pucará at 3,010 meters above sea level and ends in the parish Telimbela at 1061 meters above sea level, with a change of climate that goes from a cold climate until arriving at a warm climate, with a change of vegetation during all the route.

The route is 15 km; This activity empowers Ecuador as a destination for adventure tourism, summoning figures of mountain biking from countries such as Brazil, Canada, Uruguay, USA, and Germany. As an added value, we can indicate that this tour is the best in the country with regards to Downhill and it is located in the third position of South America, as it has been called the National Geographic Magazine and Bike Magazine.

Access this article online

Website: www.japer.in

E-ISSN: 2249-3379

How to cite this article: Camacho R, Hernandez F, Arcos V, Torres JP, Sanchez G. Mama Rumi ecological route and its tourism potential, for the community development of the Telimbela parish, Ecuador. *J Adv Pharm Educ Res.* 2020;10(4):29-36. Source of Support: Nil, Conflict of Interest: None declared.

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Literature review

Tourist Routes

The tourist routes take different denominations such as corridors, routes, circuits, roads or itineraries, they try to differentiate themselves from their competitors by highlighting certain resources that are present in the territory or that are artificially imagined and created. It invites the visitor to explore a journey in which a certain patrimonial category predominates, whether they are cultural events, testimonies of the archaeological or historical past, artistic or industrial heritage or natural spaces ^[1].

There are tourist routes recognized worldwide, which could be recommended to tourists, however, if tourists walk freely in a tourism area, they discover their favorite places by themselves. This experience can remain in the memories of tourists more strongly than in those who visited the recommended places ^[2].

In the tourist market of today, the consumers look for differentiated tourism products, the reason why the offer must adapt offering alternatives to the massive tourism. Some examples are tourist routes, which create a route based on a theme or resource. Therefore, many of them currently exist: economic, gastronomic, wine tourism or even some less known as linked to movies or series. ^[3]

Ramírez (2011), has shown that tourist routes constitute a global phenomenon that is materialized locally within the framework of territorial strategies of economic dynamism and positioning in the international tourist market. However, in their diversity, they generally tend to decontextualize heritage, to dismantle the territories where they are located and to construct territorial images that do not fully correspond to the social and cultural realities of the place where they are implanted. Also, it states that tourist routes must conform to the community organization, contributing to territorial structuring, avoiding socio-territorial economic imbalances and promoting a holistic or comprehensive view of cultural heritage based on indigenous symbolic uses and values. The initial level is environment diversity that includes different factors including topography, climate, and habitats ^[4].

About cultural heritage, which may be part of a tourist route, it should be noted that it is not limited to the historical-artistic concept, but also encompasses the intangible or intangible features that characterize a society or social group. Cultural tourism, in short, is based on a wide range of resources and products related to humanity, which according to Miguel Ángel Troitiño (1998) cited in ^[5], and for rural areas, can be grouped based on the following typologies: a) historical-cultural resources, of a very diverse nature and with high potential for the tourist revaluation of the rural environment; b) environmental resources, elements of the landscape that confer a high degree of attraction for the visitor; c) landscape resources, which in rural areas have an important meaning; and d) ethnological-anthropological resources, represented by the set of customs and traditions. On the other hand, the natural heritage, object of social and tourist valuation, is integrated within a broader general

process of development of the ecological paradigm and the greater sensitivity for the environment; an ecological conscience that defends the adequate and non-aggressive use of natural resources and their preservation ^[5].

Within the routes, tourist itineraries are established that consist of a thematic tour of a community or geographical area, which allows the knowledge of their values and more particular attractions, able to attract visitors and motivate their movement along it, visiting their resources, carrying out activities and using the services that have been enabled for that purpose ^[6].

In Ecuador, national and foreign tourists enjoy the exercise and the landscapes offered by the different ecological routes where it can be done, hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, etc. In the country, several initiatives include sports and tourism as an option that communities in the rural sector are taking to generate development opportunities ^[7].

In 2016, according to the Administration of the Chimborazo Fauna Production Reserve, 2 ecological routes have been inaugurated in the province of Bolívar, which begin at the Carriel Hermanos refuge, at an altitude of 4,800 meters, and Edward Whymper, a 5,000 m. The ascent takes about an hour. In this area, you can see the timid vicuñas and alpacas, the star hummingbird, the curiquire and other species of the area ^[7, 8].

According to the research carried out by Arcos (2016), in the sector of Telimbela has been identified an agro-tourism route that is integrated by several resources such as crafts, gastronomy, agricultural production, trapiches, and natural attractions, and it is considered necessary to carry out a technical study where the route of the route, the signage, and other facilities are established as elements that allow influencing the development of the tourist activity ^[8].

Tourism as a dynamic element in the communities.

Efforts of community-based tourism development can be found in many parts of the world, but are more prolific in developing economies such as Asia, Africa, and Latin America, given that it is considered a key tool in alleviating poverty ^[9-11]. Tourism strategy reveals the real form that tourism takes ^[12].

National governments and international development are promoting tourism as a means to finance both the conservation of biodiversity and the alleviation of poverty centered on rural areas ^[13].

There are different activities and tourist products that have developed and gained ground in terms of demand, cases such as agrotourism, eco-agrotourism, traditional gastronomy ^[14, 15]. They can offer an opportunity to generate socioeconomic benefits in the communities, in addition to becoming a complement in local development ^[16].

Community-based tourism has an impact on less-favored areas. Women's agrotourism cooperatives are a perfect example of the application of the green economy, complying with the principles of sustainable development ^[17]. In this sense, investment in social agriculture projects represents long-term savings in public

spending. Public administration support has developed progressive and effective legislation to promote small-scale agriculture and tourism ^[18, 19].

In Ecuador, the tourism strategy since its construction was participatory was developed by more than 280 public and private actors and the communities involved in general, currently contributing as a socio-economic development alternative to improve the living standards of the inhabitants, with a gender and generational participation that promotes the sustainable use of natural resources ^[20]. About tourism activities, Ecuadorian rural communities, share their homes with tourists and allow them to fully understand their customs, their daily lives, and their ancestral knowledge, some indigenous communities have realized that tourism can generate more resources and have open its doors to show the attractions of its towns and its regions from a unique perspective ^[21].

In Asia, cases can be evidenced, where agriculture contributes to the development of communities, carry out activities of agricultural experience to offer tourists, these activities are novel, they know farming techniques, practice traditional sports, and what they most recognize tourists, is that they are in contact with nature ^[22]. Also, referring to the economic contribution, farmers obtain a direct income from the sale of their products to visitors ^[23]. As can be seen, this development has impacted residents, on the one hand attracting tourists to the area, which has had an impact on the diversity of businesses with more employment opportunities and, as a point of note, has retained existing residents. ^[24]

Changing the scene, in Europe, in rural locations; several factors have helped to have favorable conditions for development, tourism in combination with agriculture has become important, as a result of the high tourism potential during summer and winter, you can find a stable economic situation in general, good conditions ecological, relative social structure, as well as the identity of people with the region ^[25, 26]. Continuing with the European case, some projects that have caused success, where they organized several rural laboratories with resilient communities, involving key actors of agrifood chains, rural tourism sector, consumers and local institutions. This participatory process addresses the challenge that farms have in accessing distribution channels given their small size, resulting in the creation of an environment of product identity, which leads to the conception of a virtual electronic market platform, negotiated between different stakeholders, to promote direct sales of local agri-food products among quality-conscious consumers ^[27]. Also, the success of food products can not be separated from the personal characteristics of entrepreneurs, who consciously or unconsciously affirm their personalities and make novel products for tourists or consumers ^[28]

In the same context of rural activities, now referring to livestock, as a system of farms, whose objective is to achieve local development, this innovation is the coexistence between reproduction and tourism, the strength of this network consists of the proposal of giving value, allowing breeders to preserve cultural heritage, consequently allowing rural areas, livestock

systems to be attractive for a certain type of tourism. This typology must be respectful of the principles and values of those who have been working for generations in agriculture ^[29].

Methodology

The present research was carried out under the qualitative methodological perspective, through an analysis of primary and secondary information related to the Mama Rumi ecological route, obtained through interviews with specialists in tourism and academics, to determine the potential of tourist attractions, the manual of methodology for inventories of tourist attractions of the ^[21] has been taken as reference, this file also provides the hierarchy of them, later with the ArcGis program, we trace the ecological route, highlighting the attractions with greater significance. Finally, it was considered the design of development strategies whose characteristics focused on a strategic vision of the territory, actors with initiative capacity, cultural identity as a lever of development and the articulation of public and private actors, within this same theme it is pointed out the objectives and characteristics of local tourism development, which are summarized in consolidating a community management model that promotes a tourism product and its commercialization.

Results

Situational diagnosis of the Parish Telimbela

According to data from the Plan for Development and Territorial Planning ^[21, 30] and field research, the Telimbela parish of Chimbo canton has the clear limitations in terms of infrastructure and connectivity, on the subject of accessibility, deficiency in the provision of quality tourist services, provides a scenario in which the development process requires a strong investment especially inaccessibility. In the Telimbela parish, according to information from the National Institute of Statistics and Census, NISC ^[31], it has a population of 3,257 inhabitants, of which 1,669 are men and 1,588 are women.

According to the statistics of access and assistance to education, mainly in the initial, basic and primary levels whose average is 90.25%, secondary with average of 62.95%, the level of Bachillerato is 39.81% and in a low percentage of the university student whose average is 10.76%, the population that accesses these levels of education is slightly balanced, both men and women.

The parish has fertile soils suitable for agriculture and livestock, ranging from an altitude of 60 meters above sea level to 2,667 meters above sea level, most of the area of land is flat with slopes of 12 to 20 degrees in its vast majority, and subtropical climate, therefore, the conditions of great diversity of crops are lent, also, there are two zones of low and medium production corresponding to communities according to altitude.

In the lower area of this community, you can establish the most important productive activities: the production of Orito, orange,

fine cocoa of aroma and CCN-51, silk, banana, cassava, coffee, common and improved pastures, specifically for the present study is considered as an area to sectors that are between 60-700 meters above sea level. This area is bordered by the Caluma canton of the province of Bolívar and the Montalvo canton of the province of Los Ríos. It has an advantage, that the topographic characteristics for the development of agricultural activities are flat and semi-flat, as well as the axis the road is good since it has the connection for the two cantons mentioned above with a paved network, and between the communities, it is ballasted in regular and good conditions.

In the middle area of the parish, we can highlight the common pasture crops (elephant), honey grass, pastures (brachiarias), sugar cane, Lima, orange, coffee, silk, bananas, soft corn, it is important to mention that in this zone there are representative extensions of small forests, from which springs are born that feed the rivers of the parish. With the purpose of a better understanding of this work has been determined as this area to communities that are in a range greater than 700 meters above sea level to 1,500 meters above sea level, most of the topography

of these locations are semi-flat topography and pending, the communication situation through the road axis is regular since only weighted local roads are available.

In the high zone, the common pasture crops (elephant grass), honey pasture and Kikuyo prevail, which are generally potentiated for the production of dual-purpose cattle, also, there are small plantations of blackberry, tree tomato, naranjilla, cane sugar, and soft corn. It has been considered for this area, communities that exceed 1,500 meters above sea level, in which, the topographic conditions are mostly steep slopes, have primary forests, one of the main factors of their limited development are the conditions of the roads they are generally in poor condition and in many cases, the producers do not have so they must move from the centers of their communities to their farms using animals or on foot with a length of time that lasts up to 3 hours.

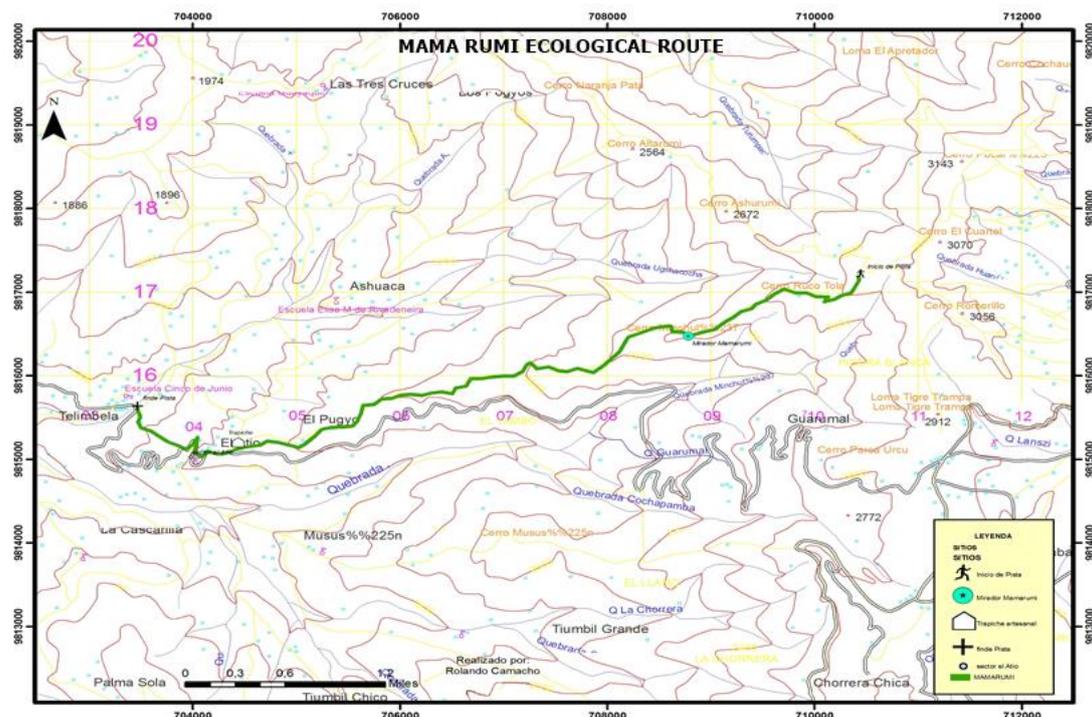
Tourist potential of the Mama Rumi ecological route

Then, in the most synthesized way, the main tourist attractions of the route are shown.

Table 1. Tourist attractions of the Mama Rumi ecological route

N°	Name of the attraction	Category	Type	Sub-type	Hierarchy	Location
1	Mama Rumi	Natural attractions	Forests	Bushy eyebrow	III	Latitude: -1.659425920 Length: -79.1213580
2	Waterfall "San Francisco"	Natural attractions	Rivers	Waterfall	II	Latitude: -1.629510964 Length: -79.178780701
3	Waterfall "Cueva de los Tallos"	Natural attractions	Rivers	Waterfall	II	Latitude: -1.670932699 Length: -79.137668567
4	Waterfall "Chonta Pucará"	Natural attractions	Rivers	Waterfall	II	Latitude: -1.684720820 Length: -79.183582723
5	Traditional trapiche "Telimbela"	Cultural manifestations	Cultural and Popular Heritage	Crafts and Arts	II	Latitude: -1.678916928 Length: -79.185187607
6	Waterfall "El Tesoro"	Natural attractions	Rivers	Waterfall	II	Latitude: -1.645754116 Length: -79.152239952
7	Petroglyph stones	Cultural manifestations	Architecture	Archaeological area	II	Latitude: -1.668822237 Length: -79.181890045

Source: Researchers Team



Source: Researchers Team

Map 1. Mama Rumi eco-route

We have made a map in ArcGIS, detailing the path of the Mama Rumi ecological route with its tourist attractions. The route begins in the sector of Pucará at 3008 masl with a temperate climate, there we can appreciate a charming landscape, a natural viewpoint to observe the formation of clouds, when descending, we find abundant vegetation, mainly ferns and a variety of orchids that adorn the road in the form of tunnels.

It is important to mention that the trail is characterized by being the longest in the country, the second in South America and it is positioned among the 10 best routes in the world because it has 15 km of descent along an ancestral path that makes it the best route most important for the practice of Downhill (an extreme form of mountain biking). The terrain can be described as abrupt towards the coastal area, rocky, sandy, loose parts, mud, passes through muddy rivers, steep parts, natural jumps and superelevations that make it unique in our country, for cyclists, ecologists, and adventurers.

Continuing with the tour, at 2400 masl, we find the Mama Rumi stone, it is a natural viewpoint with a spectacular view towards the coast, later, from 2000 masl we already observe vegetation change and we begin to feel a warm climate, each a certain section we find several species of orchids, tree of paper, pink poma, among others, that give a natural charm to the path, between 1800 msnm, we already observe plantations, subtropical cultures. There is a technical stop to visit the traditional artisan trapiches in various sectors of the study town, also at this point, we appreciate the view of 2 beautiful waterfalls, known as "Cueva de los Tallos" and "de los Muebles". Between 1500 masl, we reach the Atio Enclosure at a temperature of 17 to 22 ° C, where we can see plantations of banana, orito, Lima, lime, coffee, yucca, Chinese and orange potatoes, continuing with the route we have a fairly long stretch pronounced for bicycles but fun and unique

according to comments from athletes; immediately we reach the exit of the path, passing through the Telimbela River, 800 meters above sea level, in this place, we can recreate in the natural slopes where you can make baths and enjoy the lovely weather, which fluctuates between 18 and 23 ° C.

In the central part of the parish, you can see the petroglyphs, the cultural part, and festivities of the Telimbela parish community, without forgetting to delight their traditional gastronomy.

Tourism development proposal

In an approximation to the possible structure on which the generation of the tourist development proposal of the Mama Rumi ecological route will be based, it is necessary to promote a cross between the information raised by component. On the other hand, the basic guideline is to propose actions in the short and medium-term, to demonstrate a dynamic impact and allow to consolidate the actions and strategies defined to continue its implementation in the medium term. This combination will focus on proposing concrete actions, based on the management and capacity of interinstitutional articulation of actors, to activate a consumable tourism supply. The strategies that initially allow the organizational strengthening with the conformation of the community company, this as an element that will generate a local offer by promoting the provision of services in an orderly manner.

The community organization will be defined through a local consensus and taking into account the skills of families, also, it must have legal status and for-profit, linked to the principles of popular economy and solidarity which guarantees the interior have internal regulations that guarantee the development of

processes in the offer of tourism services oriented towards quality.

Community leaders should be people with credibility and broad responsibility in the parish, who promote the organization to form a community enterprise, which will have two areas, one administrative and one operational. In the administrative area, management, administration, promotion, sales, coordination, statistics, quality control and maintenance of tourist sites are included.

The operational area will be in charge of the guides, food and beverage service, lodging service, local transport service, recreational service, equipment, and implements. For the support of the community organization of Telimbela, inter-institutional collaborators will be hired in the administrative and operational areas.

Constant and periodic training processes must be generated, articulating public and private actors on administrative and legal management of the community enterprise, in such a way that labor competencies are developed; both administratively, commercially and legally. The training process will be directed to the people who will be in charge of the administrative, tax and operational area, workshops will be held on the legal framework that sustains the community tourism activity.

The training of the associates is related to the acquisition of knowledge in community tourism, the development of skills to undertake profitable business that is a complement to the services provided by the community organization and how to manage natural resources sustainably. Therefore, training refers to the methods that are used to provide people within the company with the skills they need to do their job.

The processes that will allow generating local capacities should count as transversal axes, as well as mentioning the following: organizational strengthening; gender; management of community enterprises; popular and solidary economy; interculturality and management of natural resources.

The offer of tourist services must resort to financing from public and / or private banks so that gastronomic and community housing establishments improve their condition and infrastructure. Besides, we will work with local initiatives such as the "Minga" to organize workgroups to maintain the tourist sites. The commercialization of tourist products will begin with the implementation of a tourist coordination and operation office that will allow marketing the products and services that are offered locally.

The marketing channels will be direct and indirect, through strategic alliances to achieve maximum sales efficiency^[32].

The direct sale of tourism products by the community company will have advantages, such as greater control of marketing; great flexibility to react to market changes; greater effectiveness of efforts for interpersonal relationships; and, the possibility of rapid local application of innovations.

The tourist packages that the community company will offer will be commercialized through national and international tourism intermediation companies. Among the main advantages with these alliances will be a greater guarantee of promotion by more

efficient means; greater coverage of marketing; and, reduction of operating expenses.

Discussion

According to the results obtained, it is considered that the Mama Rumi Route contains the necessary elements to develop tourism in the Telimbela sector, considering what was stated by^[1] who indicates that a certain heritage category predominates in a tourist route, since being cultural manifestations and natural spaces for which it is important to mention that the route Mama Rumi contains the ancestral and natural characteristics to be considered as a tourist trail; considering the vegetative change observed from a cold to a warm subtropical climate (60 masl to 2,667 masl), in which 5 natural and 2 cultural attractions have been determined as can be seen in the results. Also^[2] considers that visitors discover their favorite places by themselves, this could be for their tastes or needs that attract them to make the trip, the route could be striking for those who like the Extreme sport such as Downhill (downhill biking, mountain biking), as well as for those who like to enjoy nature.

The population of the Telimbela Parish is mostly dedicated to agricultural activities due to the diversity of climatic floors that lend themselves to a great diversity of crops, both in its highlands and lowlands, as well as livestock and the artisanal industry with the production of the trapiches; which would be an opportunity for agrotourism development, eco-agrotourism, traditional gastronomy, as mentioned Karampela *et al.*^[14]. Which can offer an opportunity to generate socioeconomic benefits in the community and support local development as indicated^[16].

Conclusions

Taking into account that, for any tourism development proposal of an area, it is necessary to evaluate or diagnose the potential, emphasizing that, for the present analysis, the approach is addressed with a preponderance in the quality of the tourist resource, considering an adequate intervention process and a model of sustainable development, a tourism resource can become an iconic attraction such as the Mama Rumi ecological route.

In conclusion, the resource Mama Rumi can generate flows and therefore income, the constraints are given mainly by accessibility conditions, the lack of tourism infrastructure that puts value on resources. On the other hand, the management capacity of the inhabitants, through their political representatives, allows us to envision a scenario, which, through actions of interinstitutional coordination, promotion of family enterprises, the establishment of community tourism centers (CTCs). It would propitiate actions of beginning for the tourist advantage of the sector.

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