

PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN TIQUIPAYA AND THE CITY OF FREDERICTON

DEVELOPING KHORA PARK AS AN ECO-EDUCATIONAL TOURISM PROJECT

1. Project Scope

1.1. Summary

The Eco-Educational Tourism project was designed and carried out through dialogue and cooperation between the Tiquipaya municipality technical team and its Canadian counterpart, the City of Fredericton. Tourism development is central to local economic development (LED) in Khora Park (PEPK). This project has the potential to improve the area, bringing benefits to the communities living in the park and in the metropolitan area of Cochabamba.

The purpose of this project is to redefine the relationship between humans and nature. Tiquipaya's main contribution was to restore ecological balance and to achieve harmonious coexistence between humans and nature in this part of the valley.

The Khora Park project is seen as a way to resolve, or at least mitigate, urban decay, and curb environmental damage from destructive trends in the use of urban land. The valley is currently facing the challenges of uncontrolled urban growth. See more: <http://pmde-fcm.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/p1303.pdf>.

In Cochabamba's city core, the lack of green areas is becoming more and more evident with the increase of paved streets and the ever-denser construction of houses and tall buildings. The response to this issue has usually been projects proposing scattered and fragmented actions that deepen the problem, rather than seeking a comprehensive solution based on capacity building for sustainable development.

The Eco-Educational Khora park comprises an area of over 49 hectares. Conditions are in place for the communities to recover their habits of harmonious coexistence with Mother Earth. The park can also make an important contribution to a large metropolitan setting. This microregion has great potential for local development, but this special value has been neglected and wasted.

1.2. Methodology

Given the comprehensive nature of the project involving many public and private stakeholders, it was proposed to make the park the governing, converging body for all other actions and interventions concerning local economic development, environmental protection, and ecotourism. Khora Park would be the focus of ecotourism as a platform for LED.

The Park Master Plan (PMP) was defined as the instrument to bring together the different actions and actors involved in promoting the participation and constructive contribution of the different sectors, which would ensure the highest level of sustainability of the tourism project.

The PMP coordinates programs, subprograms and projects. It organizes a set of educational activities for intervention and dissemination of environmental and economic matters related to water, forests and other important issues involving the park's contribution to the basin in this part of the valley.

The municipal government has developed technical capacity for environmental management, in dialogue with private sector stakeholders and civil society actors.

Informed by private-public dialogue, within the framework of North-South cooperation between Fredericton and Tiquipaya, a local team developed the Park Master Plan with inputs through technical cooperation missions in both countries. A series of projects were identified based on two programs.

The municipal government's administrative and technical divisions are responsible for implementing programs and projects in coordination with the Khora Park team and the community of Tiquipaya.

Planning Tool

A planning tool that secures the necessary conditions for environmental education was required. This tool was to help preserve and restore ecological systems and ecological balance, bringing about a culture for the protection and proper use of Mother Earth. It would



include learning about the living systems in the park and using them in a sustainable manner. This model of living in harmony with nature should bring about and foster social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits. It should improve people's lives, taking into account relevant regulatory instruments and working together, in a participatory manner, with the institutions and communities of the city of Tiquipaya over the 2011-15.

Learning from Mother Earth program

Khora Park becomes a hub for learning about nature through projects aimed at coordinating the Comprehensive Watershed Management Program (PROMIC) and the city.

The Living Classroom Project addresses the lack of open spaces and learning opportunities in the education system. This project aimed at introducing comprehensive educational processes in a natural, undeveloped area as part of the formal learning practice to provide students with concrete demonstrations about local knowledge and practices.

Educational Plots where students from the districts can apply and demonstrate the knowledge systems of the region through farming practices. An important component was the setting up of nurseries close to compost pens. These places became practical school settings with open dialogue between students and technical experts.

The Water Nurturing Project proposed to “link and coordinate the knowledge of water as a living element on our planet, teaching students about the vital role that water plays in human activities, as well as the different usages of water.” Given the need for water to reach other areas, the project included the construction of irrigation ditches or distribution channels for existing water resources and other usages, such as ponds, mills, infiltration, canals and water sources.

The Forest Nurturing Project dealt with current issues such as a decrease in trees and shrubs, vegetative cover and native fauna; soil compaction that reduces the ability of water infiltration and increases runoff; loss of biodiversity and genetic resources; and different types of soil erosion, affecting the water cycle and diminishing groundwater levels.

The Interaction Centre provides a space to promote, organize and sponsor interaction programs among institutions involved in environmental protection. Successful experiences in the management of urban areas can be shared and disseminated. It sponsors events that highlight environmental bio-agricultural management processes and coordinates initiatives

for community participation in programs and projects begun under the park project.

Watershed Management includes risk assessment as an important component in the development of plans, programs and projects of a social or productive nature, and particularly in the Master Plan of the eco-educational Khora Park. It includes approval of resolutions and city ordinances with participation of affected communities, representatives of grassroots organizations and city hall technicians. Based on risk assessment, a portfolio of projects is prepared taking degrees of risks into account.

Tourism portal and area coordinator program

Located on the Ecological Avenue, the PEPK has the land potential for becoming a Tourism Portal and Area Coordinator. This program includes subprograms and projects, including Molinos — The Pajcha, tours (trails, cross-country, bike paths, horse riding), lookouts (rest areas, bird-watching), restaurant areas (grills, food courts, soda dispensers), sports training centre (football 8, racket games, handball, pelota, volleyball, gym, swimming pool), Eco Sports (climbing, rappelling, paragliding, mountain biking).

Promoting social and economic initiatives

Activities to foster LED with a high level of community involvement were carried out under the PEPK Project in different sectors, including organic production initiatives involving food and flowers.

1.3. Key partners and stakeholders

The agreement between the City of Tiquipaya and the City of Fredericton under the Municipal Partners for Economic Development (MPED) program played a major role. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) promoted the program, provided the funds, facilitated many of the activities and provided support to



the Tiquipaya municipality technical team for monitoring activities, drafting the master plan and, especially, for the geographic information system (GIS). The FCM contribution was important for the approval and acceptance of the final version of the Master Plan for the park, leading the way for contributions by other partners to several of the Plan's different components.

Key public sector stakeholders were the Governor's Office and, eventually, coordination bodies of the Metropolitan Area of Cochabamba. The project objectives would also benefit the different governments in the metropolitan urban area.

Private organizations and small enterprises have partnered with the park, and are undertaking joint activities. Organic farmers, compost producers, flower growers, people with disabilities, artisan bakers and small business entrepreneurs, among others, are reaping the benefits of the activities carried out under the umbrella of the Khora Park project, particularly through training and business management. Schools, representatives of restaurants and hotels, travel agencies and transportation are among the main partners in the City of Cochabamba. Although training is still underway, this sector will be very dynamic in forging alliances and public-private ventures in the context of social and economic inclusion. It is the most visible side of the project's potential for inclusion and sustainability, the coordinating body fostering the implementation of a multiple-stakeholder project.

The Khora Foundation-Promotion Committee comprising public institutions and private sector stakeholders became a venue for dialogue. Although it is still in its initial stage, it is already seen as important for the sustainability of the tourism program.

The Federation of Municipal Associations of Bolivia (FAM) and, especially, the Association of Municipalities of Cochabamba (AMDECO) have played a key role in disseminating information about the project and creating spaces for dialogue. AMDECO has become a meeting place for discussing issues of interest at all levels: municipalities, Governor's Office, central government and private institutions.

With regard to inclusiveness, the targeted beneficiaries of the PEPK tourism program were women, men, students, seniors, people with disabilities and small producers. The park project aimed to improve living conditions for communities in the metropolitan area, but particularly for residents of Tiquipaya who, in addition to enhanced living conditions, would have more income-earning opportunities from the park's services such as catering, transportation, restaurants, arts and crafts, and services in general.

Tiquipaya students and, eventually, students from other towns, have an opportunity for practical learning about Mother Earth, including natural resources, farming and conservation practices.

Medium-size producers and services enterprises will be able to expand into the metropolitan area and beyond, especially in such sectors as organic production, flowers, catering and transportation.

2. Project outcomes

2.1. Expected versus actual results

The project design focused on strengthening local development mechanisms under the municipal government and in collaboration with Canadian partners. This North-South cooperation exercise was a mutual learning experience. The results expected were as follows:

- To consolidate local tourism as a central LED component based on local public-private dialogue and cooperation.
- To design a Master Plan showing all activities to be undertaken for carrying out the tourism program organized in order of importance, specifying the strategy, the programs and the corresponding resources required.
- To develop the Park Master Plan as a hub, where solutions to local urban development problems would be discussed: garbage collection, slaughterhouses, tree felling, burning of plant species, environmental pollution and attempts to divide land into lots.
- To gather all public documents related to the PMP, including those related to equipment and legal and financial matters, necessary to make the Khora Park program viable.
- To have a technical planning and operations team in charge of coordinating activities within the municipal government. This technical team was to have the support of the other technical departments and that of the political body of the government.
- To have a project management steering committee responsible for coordinating the roles of the public and private sectors, and that of the Promotion Committee-Khora Foundation.

The expected results mentioned above were achieved and, though uneven in their development, the main factors for the success of the project are in place.

The scope of this project was very broad and hardly achievable during the life of the PMDE program. It was hoped, however, that objectives set for the demonstration

project concerning strengthening and sustainability would be met. In this respect, it has been possible to gather information and identify the existing potential both in the municipal government and in local and nearby institutions. The municipality now has the basic documents necessary for the operation of the program.

A political municipal decision has been made to continue the project during the next administration.

A SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) assessment in the initial phase of the project shows that several of these positive aspects have already been achieved: <http://pmde-fcm.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/p1357.pdf>.

The Promotion Committee has had recent experiences collaborating with other institutions. There is great cooperation potential with partner institutions and other stakeholders since the impact of the project could extend beyond the Tiquipaya Township to the entire metropolitan area.

There is great institutional potential that can bring about sustainability to the Khora Park Project and local tourism development, including: Forest School (ESFO), San Simón University (UMSS), social research institutions such as the Centre for the Study of Economic and Social Reality (CERES), the Bolivian Centre for Multidisciplinary Studies (CEBEM), the Centre for Community and Municipal Development (IBEM-Cedesco), public and private institutions such as La Parroquia, religious institutions, educational units, local grassroots organizations (OTB), Supervisory Committee, Civic Committee, Transport Tiquipaya, schools, Seventh Division Command. Significant logistical support was provided by the Municipality of Tiquipaya, the steering committee, and community institutions, including Infante, Kusicuna, Warmis, Alamala, Pisando Barro, and Manos Maravillosas, among many others.



Some results listed in the general objectives are taking more time to achieve, but significant progress is being made.

Although this project had a broader scope, compared with the cooperation project, it has gained acceptance and its conceptual definitions, as well as its technical, administrative and operational components, have been strengthened. This is a very important strategic achievement. Significant unforeseen outcomes have been identified and are consistent with the public policy on Mother Earth protection, for which Tiquipaya has become emblematic.

A great achievement is the Master Plan for management of the Eco-educational Khora Park.

This happy coincidence of viewpoints (those of the new municipal administration and the community organizations) concerns the design, purpose and management of the park. The project was initiated after the main problem was identified: the lack of a coordination plan for fostering a well-organized management of the park. Based on the plan now in place, it was possible to produce an institutionalized instrument for organizing the public interventions and services required by the community, taking into account the need to engage in environmental conservation practices, to control risks, and to have recreational spaces that visitors and the community can enjoy.

Many challenges will need to be overcome as the Master Plan is being implemented. Institutional interventions tend to be “provisional” in nature, random, circumstantial and lacking in continuity.

Many other issues are still under discussion, and it will take time to solve them

- Balancing the needs of the private slaughterhouse on the park grounds with the park itself.
- Refitting old sports facilities and building new ones: those in place were built under isolated initiatives
- Containing invasion threats by developers who are trying to set a precedent for the use of sports facilities
- Coordinating the interests of the dynamic sports sector: sports leagues and associations
- Organizing and fostering gymnastics events on the main soccer field.

2.2. Compatibility with cross-cutting program objectives

The project may offer a great opportunity for learning about ways to achieve positive cross-cutting impacts on such issues as gender equality and the involvement of

young people and seniors in local development activities. The range of activities that were successfully undertaken under the Master Plan with community support, including people with disabilities, constituted a significant achievement. An explicit purpose of the project was the use of new technologies to facilitate the daily appropriation of acquired knowledge and to create links with other municipalities and stakeholders through an open dialogue.

The technical team was able to develop a platform for the project that can be replicated in other municipalities in the future to enable them to organize and coordinate activities and to share the most successful practices.

The program uses a reporting mechanism that will facilitate assessment of its activities and can be used as a platform for dialogue with stakeholders in the community and beyond. <http://pmde-fcm.org/>

2.3. Sustainability

The Promotion Committee joined efforts with the technical team seeking support for the project among members of civil society and private sector stakeholders.

The Promotion Committee has to be strengthened in the following fields, for which a commitment by the municipal administration is required:

- Undertaking the implementation of the Master Plan
- Developing co-management mechanisms
- Designing a communication strategy
- Securing financial support from the municipal government.

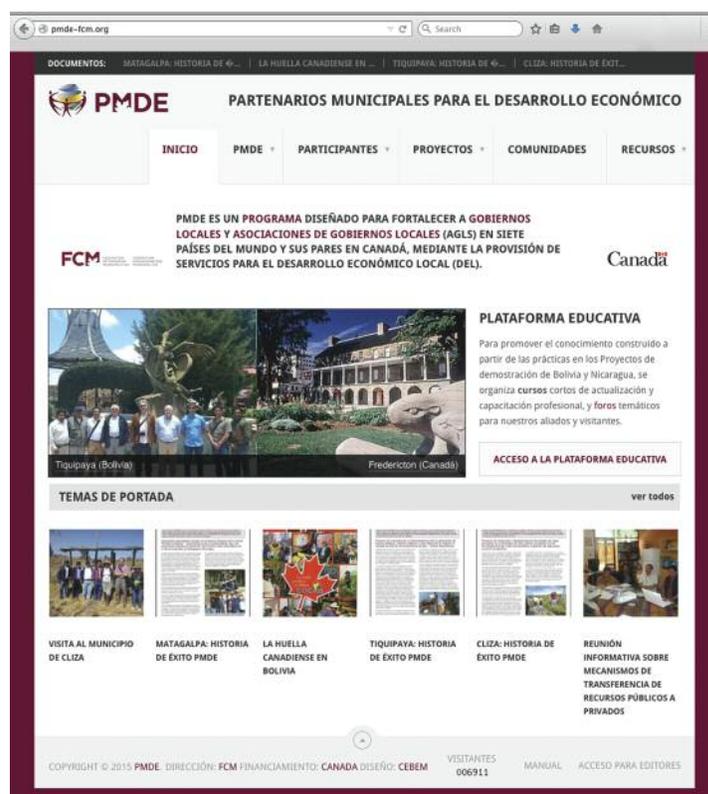
A number of consultancies have been identified, as well as new complementary support services in the fields of communication, management and technical sector knowledge. If successfully implemented, they would contribute to the sustainability of project results. The municipality is committed to using its own resources to support these activities, already included in its annual operation plan.

Dialogue processes need to be created if consensus is to be reached among broad sectors of local society. There are problems, such as garbage collection, for instance, that require strong technical and social interventions. A full implementation of the Master Plan would bring about highly positive impacts on the environment, and it could be used as a model by other municipalities.

3. The Experience

3.1. Lessons

In some cases, long-term follow-up will be necessary to ensure the lasting effects of lessons learned since they



involve processes that extend beyond the life of the project. The main lessons learned include:

1. The concept of North–South cooperation and exchange of experiences that became a reality through the implementation of the project has shown that cooperation can take different forms. Especially important were missions where local needs were discussed and partners exchanged their experiences on major issues.
2. Through the exercise of developing the Master Plan and prioritizing its components, both Canadian and Bolivian partners worked towards a common goal, which facilitated monitoring and follow-up during the life of the project.
3. Acceptance at the political level has been one of the key success factors for the Plan's potential to become a model for local economic development focused on tourism.
4. Through a well-organized technical team, the municipal government is now communicating with civil society organizations, and the program has been included in municipal policy.
5. The role of the Promotion Committee, working together with the technical team, led the way for the project to engage in a private-public dialogue that would ensure its sustainability beyond the change of administration, as well as securing future public and private financial resources.

Contacts

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