Introducción

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) through its international program Sustainable and Inclusive Communities in Latin America (CISAL), carried out a study tour to Kimberley in British Columbia, Canada, to share the role of the municipality and how it focused its efforts to transform a mining town into a tourist destination after a mine closed. In May of 2017, the municipality of Kimberley shared strategies and key elements of sustainable tourism development with representatives of seven local governments from Colombia and Peru, a representative of a mining company, a representative of the Peruvian national government and a representative of the tourist sector of Ancash, Peru.

The study tour was the opportunity to know, reflect and exchange knowledge about how municipalities can be promoters of tourism in the territory and a key player in the coordination with the business community to boost local economic development.

In the following document, a brief presentation will be given of the context of Kimberley, key messages related to the manner in which the municipality positioned its territory, coordination with the business sector and economic diversification. The Colombian-Peruvian delegation carried out an exercise for identifying good practices and lessons learned that have also been included in the document. Finally, six keys for promoting sustainable tourism development are shared, according to one of the partners of the Ancash municipalities, Jesse Ferguson, Executive Director for Tourism Kimberley.

Why is it important?

This document will provide some ideas on how to identify opportunities and address challenges in positioning tourism as an activity that energizes the local economy.
Key messages and lessons learned

Kimberley transitioned successfully from a municipality that depended heavily on mining into a tourist destination in the British Columbia region. The Study Trip delegates learned first-hand how the municipality became an enabler of tourism development and economic diversification, to the extent of positioning Kimberley as a tourist destination.

The following are some of the lessons learned identified:

» The municipality’s role as a development enabler

Citizen participation: Several consultation processes were carried out with the community to define a vision for the municipality, the values that define the community, and a roadmap to get to that vision. One of the main results of the consultation was to reposition Kimberley’s image and promote modern tourism based on their natural resources and competitive advantages.

Infrastructure investments: The municipality invested in public infrastructure, as a way to promote and integrate consumers, negotiators and producers. One example is the transformation of the municipality’s main street into a pedestrian area in order to centralize business and tourist spaces. The municipality bought land for building a ski slope and managed this slope for several years. Then, it sold the land to a private company and the funds were used for investments in similarly innovative initiatives. For example, it purchased land near the ski slope to build hotels. With this type of investment, it has managed to offer different recreational activities throughout the year: skiing, snowboarding, snowmobiling, fishing, rafting, kayaking, cycling, hiking and golf.

The municipality facilitates and promotes tourism, but it can’t ignore the other public services provided, including solid waste, water and electricity management, which supports the demand.

An agency called Tourism Kimberley was created for tourism promotion. This is a not-for-profit agency that receives support from the municipality.

» Territorial marketing, Kimberley’s strategy

Citizen participation: After the mine closed, a community consultation process was implemented, and one of the main results of this was the need to change the image of the city to a more modern one.

Community branding: They created a unified municipal brand, with a logo that could be used by the private and public sector, grassroots organizations and communities. With this strategy, they sought to position the brand amongst potential tourist, with clear and consistent messages that would summarize the essence and experience of Kimberley. They also created a slogan that would reflect the municipality’s essence and communicate the good quality of life it offered. This gave birth to: “Kimberley, a good place to be.”

Tourism promotion: The municipality promotes its offerings over different channels, including tourism fairs, websites and social networks. The municipality’s Tourism Agency also built an Information Centre in the town centre to guide tourists.

Tourist profile: The municipality found it necessary to draw up a description of the tourists that arrived in Kimberley so as to identify its target audience and understand how to address it. Thus, its target was identified as tourists that travel mainly overland from British Columbia or the northern United States.
» Coordination between the municipality and the mining company

Much of the land managed by the municipality was donated or sold at a low cost by the mining company TECK. One example is the ski slope and the golf course. The mining company also supported construction of tourist spaces to boost and diversify the economy. Some examples are: the botanical gardens, the golf course, a historical tour on an underground train that previously belonged to the mine, ecological trails, and the conference centre. With support from the mining company, the municipality was able to design a tour and a museum for learning about the town’s history with mining and extraction. “Mining doesn’t have to define who we are, but it is a part of our history.”

The municipality and the mining company collaborated to build the Sun Mine, a field of solar panels for generating electrical energy. Besides generating energy and income for the municipality, the Sun Mine contributes to Kimberley’s image and brand, as a good steward of natural resources and as a tourist destination.

» Economic diversification

Tourism isn’t the municipality’s only source of income: it acts as a gateway for business investments. Today, the municipality has other businesses that aren’t necessarily a part of the tourism value chain, including a composite pharmacy, a skateboard manufacturer, and a climbing gym. The municipality also has artisans and culinary proposals, with a farmers’ market that sells local produce.

The town acknowledges that it can’t only depend on tourism as an economic sector and, thus, seeks to attract young entrepreneurs and other industries in the service sector.

“In Kimberley we can see governance, within the roles and responsibilities of the municipalities, businesses, and the community, and how they are empowered and must fulfill their commitments with community development. The community’s sense of ownership is evident. The community has become empowered of its assets and has generated development. Its fundamental role in this development has required a response from local authorities.”

Yorkelis Martínez, municipal expert of Manaure, La Guajira
THE 6 KEYS OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

How to develop a local economy based on tourism?

1. ATTRACTION
All tourist products need an attraction. Without an attraction, there is no sense in moving forward with the next point.

2. ACCESS
If the attraction doesn’t have proper access, it makes no sense to move forward with step three. Can tourists access the attraction? Is it easy for tourists to have access to the country? The region? Your municipality? The attraction itself? Is the attraction accessible for persons with different physical capacities? Can this transition have less interruptions?

3. ACTIVITIES
Are there any activities to do at your attraction? Tourists can experience the attraction in different ways. Does your attraction provide an activity?

4. SERVICES
Services are the actions that tourists probably can’t perform for themselves. Services are what really allow the activity to be performed. Dinner, transportation, lodging, souvenirs. If your activity does not require services, we are not talking about sustainable tourism. If visitors have come to an attraction, can they find a place to eat before and after their hike? Can they find transportation to the head of the trail? Can they find acceptable lodgings for the days they will remain in the area? Is there a reputable organization that can provide a guide?

5. QUALIFIED PEOPLE
To provide sustainable services, you need qualified people to provide those services. These may include a chef, a transportation company, a guide – people qualified to provide services. Do the services required in Ancash for food, lodging, transportation or even a trail guide have qualified people attached to them? Are there persons that speak different languages?

6. PROMOTION
The first five steps may have been covered perfectly, but if nobody knows about the attraction, then all is lost. A tourist product must include promotion. How will people learn about the attraction? How will they know that the activities are safe? Is there a budget to promote the attraction?
Lessons learned

At the end of the study tour the Colombian and Peruvian delegation carried out a lessons learned and good practice reflection exercise. The following are some reflections and good practices identified:

### Strategic alliances

The municipality should seek strategic allies for the promotion of tourism projects and identify the roles and responsibilities of each actor involved. In the case of Kimberley, it is evident that the mining company can be a great ally for development. To work in an articulated way and with an established vision, Latin American municipalities can identify, consult and work hand in hand with the Chambers of Commerce, private companies, state entities in charge of training and technical assistance in development issues, tradesmen’s guilds and services (hotels, transportation, restaurants).

### Bottom-up community marketing:

Working with social and community leaders is key for community marketing, so that they contribute in the construction of a brand with which they feel attachment and identification. For the brand to have transcendence merchants, hotels, businesses, restaurants and the community, should feel appropriate of the brand. The leaders of the municipalities can be spokesmen and can inspire the communities to commit themselves to the social and economic development, through the promotion of the sustainable tourism.

### Territorial order

“For many decades the territory was used for mining, and now, it has transformed it in a sustainable way into a tourist destination. The spatial development that Kimberley has taken advantage of is something that should serve as a guide for our Latin American countries.” Mirko Chang.

### Focus

Municipalities can focus on one tourism product, rather than focusing on several or too many. By focusing on one product or one tourist experience, with the identified profile of the tourist, they will be able to go deeper and specialize, and can guarantee greater success with attracting and promoting tourism.

### Working together

Kimberley is articulated and works in collaboration with other municipalities, with the provincial and national government to promote Kimberley as a tourist destination.

The Inclusive and Sustainable Communities in Latin America (CISAL) program, implemented by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), is a cooperation initiative that seeks to contribute to the strengthening of local governments, so that they can offer greater social benefits and economic opportunities to communities in extractive contexts in Colombia and Peru. The program is funded by the Canadian government.


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