

STUDY OF TOURISM EMPOWERMENT IN THE REGION EL CHAGÜE WITH A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

ESTUDIO DEL EMPODERAMIENTO TURÍSTICO DE LA COMARCA EL CHAGUE CON ENFOQUE DE GÉNERO

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Abstract

Tourism has reached a wide diffusion around the world, so it has recently brought many developing countries into this market. Rural areas have also joined this process, where local communities share their natural environments with tourists seeking immersive wildlife and nature experiences. In rural areas, community-based tourism allows local people to maintain substantial control over the process. Also, the sustainability of projects is based on the capacity of rural experiences to limit the impacts of tourism activities, ensure central participation and involvement of rural communities, enabling cooperation between public authorities and local stakeholders, focusing on the preservation of ecosystems and on the social empowerment of weak collectives, for example improving the social role, life opportunities and self-esteem of rural women. The present article studies the successful entrepreneurial businesses that rural women of the region El Chagüe can have by taking advantage of the resources that surround them. The research defines a theoretical model that links the existence of natural and social resources in the natural space, with public and private cooperation. Emerging activities in the planning and design of the rural tourism process result in the empowerment of weak collectives in the communities, mainly women, obtaining clear benefits from tourism for the region and improving local living conditions, becoming a truly sustainable dimension to the whole process. Finally, the benefits include the reproduction of community identity, the preservation of social, cultural and natural resources of rural communities in natural areas, the limitation of tourism impacts on local and natural environments, and substantial control over the development process.

Keywords: *rural community, rural women, tourism development, rural leader.*

Resumen

El turismo ha alcanzado una amplia difusión en todo el mundo, por lo que recientemente ha atraído a muchos países en desarrollo a este mercado. Las áreas rurales también se han sumado a este proceso, donde las comunidades locales comparten sus entornos naturales con los turistas que buscan experiencias inmersivas en la vida silvestre y la naturaleza. Dentro de las áreas rurales, el turismo comunitario permite a la población local mantener un control sustancial sobre el proceso. Asimismo, la sostenibilidad de los proyectos se basa en la capacidad de las experiencias rurales para limitar los impactos de las actividades turísticas, asegurar la participación central y el involucramiento de las comunidades rurales, posibilitando la cooperación entre las autoridades públicas y los actores locales, enfocándose en la preservación de los ecosistemas y en el empoderamiento social de colectivos débiles, por ejemplo mejorar el rol social, las oportunidades de vida y la autoestima de las mujeres rurales. Asimismo, el presente trabajo investiga los emprendimientos exitosos que pueden tener las mujeres rurales de la Comarca El Chagüe al aprovechar los recursos que las rodean. La investigación define un modelo teórico que vincula la existencia de recursos naturales y sociales en el espacio natural, con la cooperación pública y privada. Las actividades emergentes en la planificación y diseño del proceso de turismo rural dan como resultado el empoderamiento de colectivos débiles de las comunidades, principalmente mujeres, obteniendo claros beneficios del turismo para la región y mejorando las condiciones de vida locales, convirtiéndose en una dimensión verdaderamente sostenible de todo el proceso. Finalmente, los beneficios incluyen la reproducción de la identidad comunitaria, la preservación de los recursos sociales, culturales y naturales de las comunidades rurales en áreas naturales, la limitación de los impactos del turismo en los entornos locales y naturales y un control sustancial sobre el proceso de desarrollo.

Palabras claves: *comunidad rural, mujer rural, desarrollo turístico, líder rural.*

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I- Introduction

Community-based tourism is a form of tourism in which the local community actively participates in this activity, which generates wealth for rural areas in developing countries, and in which the participation of the rural community is fundamental for local management, so that the benefits obtained are passed on to the community members. Also, with this type of activity it is possible to promote integral development in these communities by trying as much as possible to reduce poverty through the generation of employment and the collection of complementary income, as well as to avoid the migration of the community members abroad (Inostroza, G. 2009). On the other hand, with this modality, it offers the opportunity to create small labor-intensive tourism businesses and employs a greater number of women than in other sectors (World Tourism Organization, 2003), without forgetting that the local community is the main part of the tourism product (López-Guzmán, T. and Sánchez Cañizares, S. M., 2009). Likewise, community-based tourism generates important benefits to rural areas of underdeveloped countries, since, first of all, it has a direct impact on the families of the local population, on the socio-economic development of the region and on the lifestyle (Manyara and Jones, 2007); secondly, it allows responsible tourism that improves, in addition to the quality of life in rural areas, the natural and cultural resources of the destination places (WWF International, 2001) and, lastly, it is a way to eradicate poverty.

Therefore, community-based tourism has as its main axis the integration of experiences, lodging and restaurant services, complementary offer and tourism management, but adding a fundamental characteristic of being also a subsystem interconnected with other subsystems (such as education, health or the environment), presenting a sustainable development project created in the community and serving as an interrelationship between the local community and visitors (Cioce et al., 2007).

Finally, the research seeks that, through rural community-based tourism, the women of the region El Chagüe can identify the natural and cultural resources as well as other activities that they develop on a daily basis and be empowered with the creation of small tourism businesses in their region of origin.

II- Literature review

Rural women in Nicaragua face persistent structural constraints that prevent them from accessing the full development of their human rights. However, these women play a vital role in supporting their families and communities to generate income and improve their living conditions and overall well-being.

Nicaragua has a population of more than 6,036,000 people, with a majority female population of 3,055,000, representing 50.6% of the total. In addition, urban women represent 52.5% of the total population, while 48.6% are in rural areas (Dianova, 2006). In the country women represent most of the population, development opportunities are directed more to the male sector so there is a higher prevalence of discriminatory gender systems; It is known that rural women between the ages of 15 to 19 start families, the majority in this age period have had an average of 2-4 children and one in three women has suffered psychological, physical or sexual violence (Dianova, 2006).

Although women live in the countryside, this does not ensure their exclusive dedication to agricultural production or being submissive under the shadow of a man. According to Martínez (1999), to make a change with a gender perspective, empowerment is a development strategy that leads to processes for acquiring power on the part of vulnerable populations.

Rural women also play an important role in a country's economy, both in terms of their participation in the labor market and their contribution to productivity, both of which drive economic growth and increase GDP. In this sense, authors Peña and Uribe (2013) suggest that "rural women are a potential catalyst for poverty reduction as well as economic and social development". Indeed, the programs implemented by several countries to benefit the working conditions of rural women have led to an increase in their productivity, and this in turn has had a positive effect on the GDP of these countries (Botello and Guerrero, 2017).

The equal incorporation of women into the labor market should be a priority to ensure the economic and sustainable development of the rural sector, identifying their productive role is valuable for building development mechanisms so that women can be truly effective (Gordillo, 2015).

The gaps between rural men and women are a problem that involves most Latin American and Caribbean countries. In the region, approximately 50% of the total rural people are women, and of this population there is a significant proportion that makes the decision to migrate from their homes due to situations of poverty and violence. The quality of life of rural women is affected by work overload, lack of economic autonomy, the scarcity and lack of stability of the jobs they perform, as well as the low coverage of social protection systems. Similarly, rural women in the region are the main ones affected by the little importance given to the care economy and the number of hours dedicated to unpaid work (Peña and Uribe, 2013). The author Solari (2003) mentions that rural development is the set of results that are manifested in the improvement of the standard of living and quality of life of the inhabitants of a locality as a result of generating sustainable growth at various levels, which are strategically linked, concatenated, implied and complementary.

On the other hand, sociologist Días (2003) has shared the idea of emphasizing the importance of the participation of local stakeholders so that tourism activity can generate benefits for the community and promote sustainable local development. However, the author emphasizes that the main difficulty in achieving local development through tourism is the lack of objectives and commitment on the part of the public administration.

III- Methodology

The type of research is descriptive and field research, since it describes the role of women in the region El Chagüe, its implications for tourism development; likewise, data are collected in the place where the study phenomenon occurs. The non-experimental and cross-sectional design is used since the study variable is not manipulated and it is carried out during the determined period from April to November 2021. According to the approach it is quantitative since a numerical statistical context is analyzed to know more efficient results about the region El Chagüe.

The population under study corresponds to 412 houses of the region El Chagüe and for the selection of the sample a simple random probability sampling is used, being conformed by 121 community members.

The main objective of the research is to evaluate tourism empowerment with a gender perspective as a socioeconomic development strategy in the region El Chagüe, León-Nicaragua. A questionnaire was used for this study context, consisting of 3 blocks, with questions measured on a Likert scale 1-5 (1 not at all and 5 very much). However, the author Dávila (quoted in Galtung, 1965), states that measurement is a process of classification of units of analysis according to some chosen characteristic (2009, p.82); while the authors Carmines and Zeller (1979), define it as a process of linking abstract concepts with empirical indicators, a process that involves prior planning of operations, both of classification and quantification.

Likewise, the questionnaire is structured in three sections: basic conditions that the region El Chagüe has for the development of rural tourism, the role of rural women in the region El Chagüe, and the creation of tourism enterprises in the region.

On the other hand, once the measurement instruments were applied, the results of the surveys were obtained and processed with the Statistical Computer Program SPSS, version 22; Also, a map was designed for the El Chagüe District using the Qgis Program and Adobe Photoshop.

IV- Results

Description of the geographical area

The region El Chagüe was founded in 2001, it is considered a rural area since it is located 10 kilometers south of the municipality of León and has a territorial extension of 40 square kilometers. It is bordered to the north by Talchocote Eugenio Pérez, to the south by Salinas Grandes and the Juan Venado Island Nature Reserve, to the east by Trapichito La Leona and to the west by the indigenous neighborhood of Sutiaba. Also, the topology of the area is flat with slopes to the northwest that vary between 8% and 30% at an altitude of 40 masl to maximum elevations of 250-300 masl. The region is located in the sub-region of the Tamarindo of the coastal province of Pacific, which is why there are small plateaus, hills and mountains.

El Chagüe has a population of approximately 836 inhabitants and 412 houses, the latter are divided into small villages and farms that generally work in raising livestock, agriculture, and poultry.

Currently, the El Chagüe region has not developed tourism due to a lack of organization, use and training for community members; however, there is significant potential for the development of rural community-based tourism.

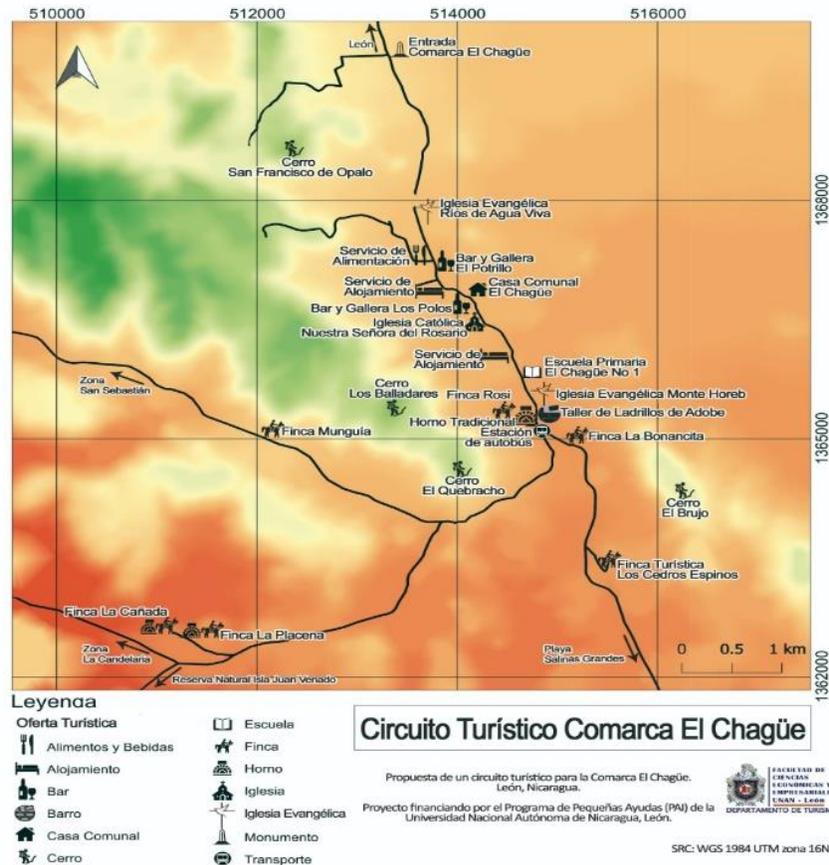


Figure 1: Map with representation of the tourist circuit, the region El Chagüe
Source: Own elaboration.

Descriptive data generated from the study

According to the data collected, it is shown that 64.5% of the community members in the study are women and 35.5% men, which indicates that most of the population are adult women. Likewise, with regard to age, on average the members of the community are 43 years old, with 18 years being the minimum age and 86 years the maximum age, all this indicates that they are people who can pass on the knowledge and teach new generation sustainability to the development of Rural Community Tourism in the El Chagüe region.

Table 1
Sex and age

	n=121	%
Sex		
Female	78	64.5
Male	43	35.5
Age		
Average age		42.64 years
Mode		25 years
Standard deviation		15.561
Minimum age		18 years
Maximum age		86 years
Age range		
18 years-25 years	16	13.2
26 years-33 years	25	20.7
34 Years-41 years	23	19.0
42 years-50 years	20	16.5
51 years or more	37	30.6

Source: Primary.

According to table 2, 45.5% represents the level of primary school, 26.4% secondary and 11.6% illiterate; however, in the study of the project, people with a low educational level are encouraged to participate in training processes, where they subsequently become interested in education programs.

Also, evaluating the community's position as a member of the region, 61.2% are housewives, 10.7% are farmers and 9.1% are workers, farm keepers and jewelers, which shows that women are the starting point for the socio-economic development of the El Chagüie region, through tourism businesses without neglecting the family. On the other hand, it is observed that 86.8% do not have studies or training in tourism, which requires strengthening efforts in education since the people of the region are interested in topics such as languages (53.7%), hygiene and food safety (51.2%) and food preparation (47.1%).

Table 2
Level of education, position as a member of the region and study in tourism

	n =121	%
Level of education		
Uneducated	14	11.6
Literate	2	1.7
Elementary school	55	45.5
High school	32	26.4
Technical	1	.8
University	12	9.9
Professional	5	4.1
Position as a member of the region		
Farmer	7	5.8
Housewife	74	61.2
Transporter	2	1.7
Professor	5	4.1
Student	2	1.7

Rancher	7	5.8
Other	11	9.1
Study in tourism	38	38
yes	16	13.2
No	105	86.8

Source: Primary.

Table 3 shows that 62.8% of the community members consider that the tours of the Isla Juan Venado Nature Reserve are of great interest for the development of rural community tourism in the region; Likewise, 62.0% of people consider milking cows and / or goats, and 59.5% horseback riding and touring productive farms in rural areas.

Table 3
Activities that the community considers developing rural tourism in the El Chagüe region

	Nothing	little	Regular	A lot	Much	Chi2	Sig. asymptotic
Horseback riding through the region	3 2.5%	4 3.3%	14 11.6%	28 23.1%	72 59.5%	134.744 ^a	.000
Productive farms tours	3 2.5%	4 3.3%	17 14.0%	25 20.7%	72 59.5%	132.017 ^a	.000
Tours of natural resources and viewpoints	3 2.5%	5 4.1%	18 14.9%	25 20.7%	70 57.9%	122.099 ^a	.000
Camps and bonfires	4 3.3%	3 2.5%	26 21.5%	21 17.4%	67 55.4%	111.686 ^a	.000
Milking cows and / or goats	3 2.5%	4 3.3%	18 14.9%	21 17.4%	75 62.0%	144.083 ^a	.000
Rural gastronomy workshops	7 5.8%	12 9.9%	26 21.5%	21 17.4%	55 45.5%	58.132 ^a	.000
Sale of local products	7 5.8%	4 3.3%	25 20.7%	19 15.7%	66 54.5%	102.430 ^a	.000
Participation in field tasks	5 4.1%	6 5.0%	18 14.9%	25 20.7%	67 55.4%	106.231 ^a	.000
Participation in cultural activities	8 6.6%	9 7.4%	25 20.7%	27 22.3%	52 43.0%	52.678 ^a	.000
Bird watching	3 2.5%	8 6.6%	18 14.9%	23 19.0%	69 57.0%	114.000 ^a	.000
Juan Venado Island tours	5 4.1%	1 0.8%	12 9.9%	27 22.3%	76 62.8%	154.826 ^a	.000

Source: Primary.

Tourism, as well as other economic development activities, brings benefits, this is the reason why 76.9% of the community members of the El Chagüe Region consider the increase in income through tourist activity to be very beneficial, 74.4% improve road infrastructure, and 73.6% improve housing, generate employment, and lower the poverty rate in the region.

Table 4
Benefits that the development of rural tourism in the region El Chagüe will generate

	Nothing	little	Regular	A lot	Much	Chi2	Sig. asymptotic
Greater source of income for the region	1 0.8%	5 4.1%	6 5.0%	16 13.2%	93 76.9%	249.537 ^a	.000
Job creation	1 0.8%	4 3.3%	5 4.1%	22 18.2%	89 73.6%	228.050 ^a	.000
Improvement of road infrastructure	1 0.8%	2 1.7%	4 3.3%	24 19.8%	90 74.4%	238.380 ^a	.000
Home improvement	1 0.8%	1 0.8%	7 5.8%	23 19.0%	89 73.6%	230.281 ^a	.000
Improve access to basic services	2 1.7%	1 0.8%	7 5.8%	26 21.5%	85 70.2%	207.719 ^a	.000
Appreciation of local culture	1 0.8%	2 1.7%	9 7.4%	27 22.3%	82 67.8%	190.529 ^a	.000
Improvement in community building	1 0.8%	1 0.8%	10 8.3%	22 18.2%	87 71.9%	215.983 ^a	.000
Greater participation of women in economic diversification	1 0.8%	1 0.8%	6 5.0%	27 22.3%	86 71.1%	216.314 ^a	.000
Care and protection of natural resources	1 0.8%	2 1.7%	6 5.0%	24 19.8%	88 72.7%	224.496 ^a	.000
Avoid migration	1 0.8%	1 0.8%	6 5.0%	25 20.7%	88 72.7%	226.397 ^a	.000
Interest in educational training	1 0.8%	1 0.8%	7 5.8%	24 19.8%	88 72.7%	224.909 ^a	.000
Lower poverty rate	1 0.8%	1 0.8%	12 9.9%	18 14.9%	89 73.6%	225.736 ^a	.000
Better functioning and coordination of the local administration of the region	2 1.7%	3 2.5%	13 10.7%	22 18.2%	81 66.9%	177.636 ^a	.000

Source: Primary.

Relationships between variables

From Table 5 the following results are obtained: In the case of female, 67.90% consider on a large scale that women in decision-making are a necessary element for gender equality in the region El Chagüe, municipality of León, while in the variables, shared responsibility in housework or jobs, both women with 65.40% and men with 65.10% coincide a lot with the scale, in the same way with the variable inclusion of values such as respect, work in team, honesty and empathy for which the woman corresponds to 60.30% and the man to 60.50%, all this makes the elements are determining factors for the region under study to have mutual communication and perform tasks together, avoiding conflicts that prevent the rural tourism development of the region El Chagüe.

Table 5
Relationship, sex and elements that are considered fundamental for the existence of gender equality in the region El Chagüe.

	Sex										P value
	Femenine					Masculine					
	Nothing	little	Regular	A lot	Much	Nothing	litle	Regular	A lot	Much	
Shared responsibility for housework or jobs.	0 0.0%	5 6.4%	8 10.3%	14 17.9%	51 65.4%	1 2.3%	0 0.0%	8 18.6%	6 14.0%	28 65.1%	.000
Teaching about the importance of sharing tasks, regardless of gender.	0 0.0%	4 5.1%	12 15.4%	15 19.2%	47 60.3%	1 2.3%	1 2.3%	8 18.6%	10 23.3%	23 53.5%	.000
Inclusion of values such as respect, teamwork, honesty and empathy	0 0.0%	3 3.8%	10 12.8%	18 23.1%	47 60.3%	1 2.3%	3 7.0%	4 9.3%	9 20.9%	26 60.5%	.000
Empowerment of women in economic and social processes	1 1.3%	3 3.8%	5 6.4%	18 23.1%	51 65.4%	1 2.3%	0 0.0%	9 20.9%	11 25.6%	22 51.2%	.000
Equal opportunity	0 0.0%	3 3.8%	7 9.0%	18 23.1%	50 64.1%	1 2.3%	0 0.0%	8 18.6%	8 18.6%	26 60.5%	.000
Greater opportunity to achieve financial credits	2 2.6%	5 6.4%	7 9.0%	19 24.4%	45 57.7%	1 2.3%	0 0.0%	6 14.0%	12 27.9%	24 55.8%	.000
Women in decision-making	0 0.0%	1 1.3%	5 6.4%	19 24.4%	53 67.9%	1 2.3%	0 0.0%	8 18.6%	11 25.6%	23 53.5%	.000

Source: Primary

According to Table 6, 64.0% of the community members surveyed said that the family has experience in community and domestic tasks, as well as in the organization and responsibility of tasks; on the other hand, 57.7% mentioned that the family has experience in crops and livestock; also, residents consider that the region is an area with the potential to develop rural tourism with all the skills and abilities that each of the family members have.

Otherwise, the people who apply the measurement instrument consider that the region does not have services, infrastructure, attractions and tourism training to adequately manage activities in the rural area; therefore, it is necessary to train them in areas that present weaknesses with respect to the nothing scale, such as in the variables of skill and dexterity in art with 60.0%, leadership and personnel management 30.0%, management and financial accounting management 40.0%.

Table 6
Relationship between the tourism potential of the El Chagüe region and the community's abilities to develop rural tourism

	Do you consider that the region El Chagüe has the potential to develop rural tourism?										P value
	yes					No					
	Nothing	little	Regular	A lot	Much	Nothing	little	Regular	A lot	Much	
Experience in community and homework	9 8.1%	11 9.9%	8 7.2%	12 10.8%	71 64.0%	1 10.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	3 30.0%	6 60.0%	.000
Organization and responsibility in tasks	7 6.3%	9 8.1%	10 9.0%	14 12.6%	71 64.0%	1 10.0%	0 0.0%	1 10.0%	2 20.0%	6 60.0%	.000
Skill and dexterity in food preparation and sale	9 8.1%	9 8.1%	19 17.1%	19 17.1%	55 49.5%	1 10.0%	0 0.0%	3 30.0%	2 20.0%	4 40.0%	.000
Skill and dexterity in art	42 37.8%	16 14.4%	21 18.9%	15 13.5%	17 15.3%	6 60.0%	2 20.0%	1 10.0%	0 0.0%	1 10.0%	.000
Leadership and personnel management	12 10.8%	8 7.2%	20 18.0%	17 15.3%	54 48.6%	3 30.0%	1 10.0%	3 30.0%	1 10.0%	2 20.0%	.000
Management and handling of financial accounting	16 14.4%	12 10.8%	24 21.6%	18 16.2%	41 36.9%	4 40.0%	2 20.0%	1 10.0%	1 10.0%	2 20.0%	.000
Experience in crops and livestock	12 10.8%	6 5.4%	17 15.3%	12 10.8%	64 57.7%	2 20.0%	1 10.0%	2 20.0%	2 20.0%	3 30.0%	.000
Ease of communication	8 7.2%	8 7.2%	16 14.4%	21 18.9%	58 52.3%	2 20.0%	1 10.0%	1 10.0%	3 30.0%	3 30.0%	.000

Source: Primary

V- Conclusion

Rural community-based tourism in Latin America is a modality that has also been making a strong appearance in Nicaragua in recent years; however, both the public and private sectors must implement actions to develop activities in rural areas of the country. Likewise, the region El Chagüe has tourism potential that can be worked through tourism ventures taking advantage of the resources, attractions, and skills that the people of the region have, positioning women in decision making, economic and social processes and employment opportunities. Therefore, a management model for tourism activity in which rural populations, organized collectively in different ways, have a greater role and control over the design, organization, development, management, and distribution of the benefits of tourism activity (Cañada, 2013).

The strengths and weaknesses of the territory are also known to implement rural community tourism initiatives and increase economic income, improve housing and road infrastructure, prevent emigration, and care for and protect natural resources, without forgetting the traditional activities that prevail in the study area. The study reflects that women are focused on being housewives, promoters of the educational system, managing household finances, which allows them to be managers of their households and to be part of the decisions that are made in the region.

For a better location of the resources, a map is made containing a tourist circuit, which highlights the services and attractions that are in the region El Chagüe, as well as to facilitate the recognition of these for the inhabitants.

Finally, in the region El Chagüe there are elements necessary to promote economic, social and environmental development, and the inhabitants are also willing to participate in the project, but not before proposing a series of topics for training to promote better growth of the rural tourism product.

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