

Management of Sport and Leisure Infrastructure in Latin America.

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1. Introduction.

The article presents in a very brief synthesis the subject of Management of Sport and Leisure Infrastructure in Latin America, due to the difficult nature of the theme.

First a brief analysis of the Latin American reality is presented considering the main aspects that define that reality.

Then an effort is made to inform about the situation of the sport and leisure infrastructure and its development in the region, trying to explain the reasons for its current state considering the Latin American reality already analyzed.

Following that a scheme of what can be done to really take care of the sport and leisure infrastructure and its management is presented, without entering in mayor details, due to the fact that every one of the mentioned aspects will have different characteristics in every country or sub-region.

Finally as conclusions the main actions that could be undertaken for the adequate management of sport and leisure infrastructure in Latin America, are emphasized.

2. Latin America reality.

First let us try to explain what Latin America is, to be able to understand, not to justify, the situation of the management of the sport and leisure infrastructure in the subcontinent.

2.1. The environment.

The region reaches from the very cold land of the south, close to Antarctica, to the northern part of Central America, going through the high lands of parts of South America the Amazon basin and the wetlands and hot humid tropic of the Caribbean.

As a consequence all kind of climates, as well as geological and geomorphic characteristics are to be found, that affect the way of living of the population.

2.2. History.

The subcontinent was discovered by the Spanish in 1492 and later the Portuguese landed in what it is Brazil today, starting the conquest that lasted until the XVIII century when between 1810 and 1830 most the countries were liberated.

Only the small colonies and islands from England, France and Holland in the Caribbean region remained under the rule of those countries until the XXth century

2.3. Demography.

The population is over 370.000.000 people and growing very strongly, consisting of about 90 % of white or mixed population, with 10 % of indigenous from 27 indigenous peoples and black people.

Portuguese is spoken by 51% of the population from Brazil, most of the other speak Spanish and in some Caribbean islands and territories French and Dutch are spoken.

Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Guatemala, México are the countries that still have large indigenous populations.

The Andes mountain that go from Chile to Venezuela reach well over 6.000 meters and are home to most of the population of Bolivia, Paraguay and part of Peru.

2.5. Social.

Although the social life situation is changing due to the influence of the media and globalization, and the women work more and more, the men are basically the support of the family.

Due to cultural reasons the Latin American still live on large families, that are a support system that allows the low income people to survive.

2.6. Economy.

There is a great variety in the economic levels of the population being the extreme cases, Haiti with a per capita income of only US\$ 528 and Chile with a per capita income of US\$ 8.900, with half of the countries having a per capita income of around US\$ 2.500.

Over 60 %, and in some cases 80% of the population, lives in threshold of poverty in the region.

As a comparison in Europe the highest per capita income is in Luxembourg with around US\$ 66.000 and over 20 countries have a per capita income of over US\$ 25.000.

2.8. Education.

All Latin American countries adopt the principle of compulsory primary education for all children, although by economic and racial reasons some of the rural population cannot get the five or six years of primary education.

In most countries education is free in some cases up to the university level.

2.7. Religion.

Although there are many religions in Latin America, due the Spanish and Portuguese influence about a 90 % is catholic.

Religion plays a role in the social and cultural life of the population.

2.9. Arts

The artistic manifestations have strong influences from the European conquerors and the native populations.

In the Caribbean region the songs and dances has very strong black influence and tropical rhythms are very popular, in the South Cone the artistic influence is much more European, and in the Andes region the presence of indigenous manifestation is stronger.

2.10. Technology.

Due to the good level of university education in Latin America, technology is well advanced although for economic reasons about 60 % of the population has no access to it with the exception of the television.

2.11. Sub regions.

In Latin America there are several identifiable regions with different characteristics.

- The South Cone formed by Argentina, Chile and Uruguay.
- Brazil, a subcontinent by itself, with almost 200.000.000 people and speaking Portuguese.
- Central South America constituted by Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador and Paraguay.
- The Caribbean region formed by Colombia, Venezuela, Panama and many small islands.
- Central América, integrated by Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Guatemala, México.

3. Sport and Leisure Infrastructure Development.

The existence of sport and leisure infrastructure depends on the country's reality that influences the sport and leisure practices and of the sport development of every country.

Due to the already mentioned reality and the cultural influences in the South Cone, there is more influence of Europe being football the most popular sport and in the Caribbean, the American influence is important, which makes baseball the most popular sport.

In a recent international survey carried out during 2007 in the region trying to find out the needs and existence of sport and leisure facilities for:

- Competitive sport,
- Sport training,
- Leisure.

In the following population sectors:

- School,
- Community,
- Labor place,
- Special Population.

The results showed that there are not enough facilities for any of the population sectors, being the least favored the Special Population and the School sectors, with a very clear deficit of leisure facilities.

In several countries, there are large sports facilities built for international sports games, that usually do not correspond to the real needs of the country and because of their size, complexity and very often wrong location, they are almost abandoned after the games are finished, creating a burden for the sports and local authorities and being of little use for the general population.

The provision of the sport and leisure infrastructure, mainly for economic reasons, due to the fact that the population cannot afford to pay for services, depends of the government, national or local, with the exception of the private social clubs of the high income population, that correspond to the 2 to 5 % of the national population.

These findings have been corroborated in several international events in the last years.

4. What to do ?

Considering that the physical, sports and recreational activities, are a natural need of all human beings for its integral development and wellbeing, the facilities as a continent of activities, must be considered an important factor of the countries development.

The above mentioned survey has shown that there is a deficit of all kinds of facilities and that the infrastructural support is poor, so that it is extremely important to define a way to provide the whole population with the adequate sports and leisure infrastructure and the most efficient way to manage it.

4.1. Needs and interests

Considering that the facilities are for the practice of the activities that are important for human development, the very first step is to study what are the real needs of activities of the population of all ages.

This study must consider the human being in its entirety as a being

- biological,
- social and
- psychological.

Since the levels and characteristics of human development change continually through the years, it is necessary consider the following groups ages:

- 0 to 3 years,
- 4 to 6 years,
- 7 to 12 years,
- 13 to 18 years,
- 19 to 30 years,
- 31 to 55 years,
- over 55 years.

Once defined the bio, social and psychological needs it is important to find out what are the interest of the population for the activities to identify the demand for infrastructure.

The interests depend of several factors whose influence may vary from one country or region to other and even from one socio economic level to other, and those factors are:

- historic precedents,
- environment,
- ethnicity,
- social life,
- economic reality,
- education,
- art,
- religion,
- technology,
- media influence.

Once known the needs and interest the real demand for sport and leisure infrastructure can be defined, without depending totally of particular interests or influences.

4.2. Reality analysis

The reality of every country must be studied to know, which are the real possibilities to provide the whole population, with the necessary infrastructure and facilities.

The reality analysis must consider the following aspects:

- natural environment,
- artificial or built environment,
- cultural reality,

- sports and leisure organizational structure,
- sports and leisure legislation,
- existing sports and leisure planning,
- specialized human resources,
- financial means,
- cadastre of existing facilities.

4.3. Planning

Once identified the needs and interests and known the reality of the country or region is possible to start a well conceived comprehensive planning process.

The planning process must encompass all the aspects necessary for the sport and leisure development and its consequently need of special infrastructure, comprehending the national, regional, municipal and institutional levels.

Since the sport and leisure infrastructure usually produces important impacts in the city sector, where it is located and some times the whole city or region, as in the case of large stadiums and/or Olympic facilities, the planning must be as comprehensive as possible and consider the following aspects:

- environmental,
- physical,
- social ,
- economic,
- cultural.

The planning process, usually the responsibility of a specialized team, must carry out a thorough process of:

- study of local regulations,
- site selection,
- utilities and services available and necessary,
- financing,
- management strategies.

4.4. Programming.

Each facility must be carefully defined in relation with the needs and interest of the sector of the population destined to serve.

The program must be part of a complete and well detailed brief to be used in the full process of the provision of the infrastructure, and must be developed with the participation of all interested parties, from the officials responsible for the project to the users, considering: sport and leisure specialists, sports leaders, designers, managers, and related authorities.

The program must define at least:

- users,
- activities,
- sports and leisure areas,
- ancillary areas,
- services and utilities,
- technical characteristics,
- community involvement.

4.5. Design.

Due to the special characteristics of the sport and leisure infrastructure, the design must be carried out by a team in which ideally some of the participants of the planning and programming of the building, must be part with the design team.

The design aspects to be taken into account are:

- character of the building in relation with the environment,
- sustainability,
- general plan and landscaping alternatives,
- volumetric studies,
- different areas definition and relations,
- ancillary areas,
- traffic flows,
- functional diagrams, bi and tri dimensional,
- technical characteristic,
- utilities and services,
- special systems,
- energy conservation,
- access and security,
- maintenance considerations,
- selection of materials,
- building process,
- functional management,
- technical follow up and evaluation.

4.6. Building process.

Due to the fact that sports and leisure facilities usually have special technical requirements and utilize some specific materials and equipments, it is important that the building process be supervised and controlled by qualified personnel.

The conditions of these controls and supervision must be considered in the design and be part of the briefing documentation.

5. Define infrastructure.

The concept of infrastructure must be well defined and understood to be successful in the utilization and adequate management of the facilities of any type to be managed.

The aspects to be considered are:

- communal and/or urban infrastructure,
- extent of impacts,
- land,
- water,
- power,
- waste,
- transport systems,
- communications,
- security,
- goods and services supplies.

6. The management.

The management of sports and leisure infrastructure in Latin America needs to be re-defined and consider the possibilities of joint participation of public and private institutions in non-

profit organizations, with professional managers and specialists, in accordance with the economic and cultural realities of the different countries.

The aspects to be considered, are very numerous reason why only a brief enumeration is suggested.

6.1 Institutional philosophy.

- Commitments of the members.
- Participation of the members.
- Objective and goals.
- Social Responsibilities.
- Economy.

6.2 Personal philosophy.

- Institutional Relations.
- Community Relations.
- Relations with personnel.

6.3 Recognition of roles.

- Institutional role.
- Role of the manager.
- Roles of the personnel.
- Role of the users.
- Community.

6.4 Evaluation of the facility.

- Sport Areas.
- Recreational Areas.
- Educative Areas.
- Complementary Areas.
- Physical training conditioning.
- Laboratories of physical preparation.
- Third age users.
- Handicapped users.
- Aquatic Areas.
- Area of adventures.
- Capacity of public.
- Flow of public.
- Service and utility areas.
- Equipments.
- Materials.
- Storages.

6.5. Management plan.

- Organizational Structure.
- Financing.
- Marketing.
- Calendar.
- Timetables.
- Personnel.
- Supervision.
- Information retrieval.

- Acquisitions.
- Cleaning.
- Maintenance.
- Repair.
- Renovation.
- Community participation.
- Administrative risks.
- Procedures and forms.
- Budget.
- Evaluation.
- Feedback.

6.6. Organizational structure.

Institutional requirements:

- Open:
 - users,
 - community,
 - city,
 - personnel,
 - supervisors,
 - administrator,
 - representative institutions.
- Closed:
 - institution,
 - administrator.

6.7. Financing.

- Public:
 - national,
 - state,
 - municipal,
 - institutional.
- Private:
 - marketing,
 - events,
 - TV rights,
 - concessions,
 - rentals,
 - tickets sales,
 - donations.

6.8. Marketing.

- Souvenirs and products.
- Advertisements.
- Special Events.
- TV rights.

6.9. Calendar.

- Special sport Events.
- Sport Season.
- Conventions.
- Fairs.
- Concerts.

- Special community events.

6.10. Schedules.

- Daily Activities:
 - practices,
 - competitions,
 - cleaning,
 - maintenance,
 - repairs.
- Weekly activities.
- Seasonal activities.
- Periodic activities.
- Special activities.

6.11. Personnel.

- Definition of needs:
 - supervisors,
 - technicians,
 - coaches / trainers,
 - educators,
 - employees,
 - cleaning,
 - maintenance,
 - repairs,
- Jobs description.
- Benefits.
- Search.
- Selection.
- Hiring.
- Supervision.
- Training / qualification.
- Evaluation.

6.12. Supervision.

- Plan.
- Control.
- Evaluation.
- Personnel.
- Activities.
- Resources.
- Equipment.
- Income.
- Expenses.

6.13. Information retrieval.

- Facility utilization.
- Users.
- Public attendance.
- Performance of personnel.
- Income.
- Expenses.
- Performance of the equipment.
- Materials / products.

- Cleaning plan.
- Maintenance plan.
- Plan of repairs.

6.14. Acquisitions.

- Definition of needs.
- Engineering specifications.
- Procedures.
- Forms.
- Bidding.
- Buys.
- Forms of payment.
- Debts / delays.

6.15. Cleaning.

- Definition of tasks.
- Definition of areas.
- Equipments.
- Materials / products.
- Personnel.
- Supervision.
- Programs.
 - Daily,
 - Weekly,
 - Monthly,
 - Periodic,
 - Season,
 - Annual.

6.16. Maintenance.

- Preventive.
- Continuous.
- Special.

6.17. Repair.

- Season.
- Annual.
- Periodic.

6.18. Renovation.

- Problems and possibilities.
- Definition of needs.
- Concept of renovation.
- Committee ad-hoc.
- Professional participation.
- Financing.
- Construction.
- Supervision.
- Evaluation.

6.19. Community Participation.

- Users.
- Schools.
- Clubs.
- Organized groups.
- City.
- Trainers / coaches.
- Educators / teachers.

6.20. Legal aspects.

- Legal Responsibilities.
- Contracts.
- Insurances.
- Personnel management.
- Biddings.
- Legal considerations.

6.21. Handling of risks.

- Insurances:
 - fires,
 - floods,
 - earthquakes,
 - hurricanes,
 - accidents.
- Risks of users.
- Risks of public.
- Equipment.
- Storage.

6.22. Procedures and forms

- Procedures management.
- Calendar.
- Timetable.
- Personnel.
- Supervision.
- Acquisition.
- Bidding.
- Cleaning.
- Maintenance.
- Repairs.
- Loans.
- Equipments.
- Contracts.
- Check lists.

6.23. Budget

- Factors:
 - facility,
 - personnel,
 - services,
 - administration,
 - supplies,
 - furniture and equipment,
 - transport,

- communications,
- special programs.
- Costs.
- Controls.

6.24. Evaluation

- Benefits to users.
- Fulfillment of objectives.
- Facility.
- Personnel.
- Cost benefit.
- Budget .
- Financing.

6.25. Feedback

- Objective.
- Basic information.
- Periodicity.
- Format.
- Follow up of personnel.

7. Conclusions.

The management of sport and leisure infrastructure is complex and requires special expertise and organizations that in the case of Latin America are almost inexistent in most countries.

The main tasks to be carried out are:

- Develop community education and awareness.
- Training of varied human resources.
- Establish an information and documentation system.
- Develop a cadastre of centers and facilities.
- Establish a network of centers to work together.
- Develop a certification system for centers and facilities.
- Establish community support groups.
- Develop international cooperation.
- Work in cooperation with existing bureaucracies.
- Maintain a continuous evaluation process and feed back.

In spite of the apparent complexity of the task the adequate management of sport and leisure infrastructure it is an effort, that must be made by the importance of the physical, sport and leisure activities in the development and wellbeing of all human beings.