

## **Capacity building in heritage management of the Stone Zoo for the development of Manuel Tames**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The objective of the work is the development of an action plan aimed at training capacities in heritage management of the Stone Zoo in the municipality of Manuel Tames. The study used document analysis, structured external observation, and semi-structured interviews with 44 prioritized actors in the period 2019-2023. The state of the interactional alliances is visualized based on the contradictions existing in the context, despite their potentialities for sociocultural tourism.

**Keywords:** Training; Management; Heritage; Alliances

### **Introduction**

The process of cultural and natural heritage management generates a break with the rigid conception of strategies patented by management plans that endorse schematic routes, without considering the diverse and differentiating character of the contexts. This is one of the main conclusions drawn from the Intercontinental Conference Cultural Management and Sustainable Development Goals in the Framework of International Cooperation: the planet strategy, held in late November 2021 by the Andalusian Association of Cultural Management Professionals-GECA.

Precisely, the need to manage cultural heritage is not a new global concern, as since the 18th century there have been important transformations in the way of managing it in coherence with the evolution of development policies and the innovations recreated in conservation practices. In this task, Latin America and the Caribbean is a region that possesses an irrefutable patrimonial wealth, in which there are cases of inadequate management expressed in contradictions between what is politically desired and the existing conservation praxis.

In Cuba, although the achievements in heritage conservation are recognized, the efforts are insufficient, from which emerges the need to train managers and broader educational processes with public outreach, which emphasize groups of beneficiaries from the formation of multi-stakeholder alliances that contribute to the management of cultural heritage in a territory. Due to this, the study of participation in heritage management acquires validity from the Cuban economic and social policy that promotes studies on decentralization models that improve governability and governance mechanisms.

The above is endorsed in the provisions of Decree No. 33 of 2021 for the strategic management of territorial development, approved by the Council of Ministers and published in the Official Gazette of Cuba No. 40 Ordinary of April 16, 2021 (Official Gazette of Cuba, 2021). The management of cultural heritage in its structural and functional duality is conceived in the differentiated interactions between key social actors in the forms of assimilation and appropriation of space, in this case Zoológico de Piedras, which maximizes the binding function of heritage management as an expression of participation.

According to León, Castell and García (2024) this implies not only receiving the discourse and action of the actors in the context, but also achieving commitment to the social appropriation of the knowledge generated, to turn it into a starting point for actions aimed at local development. The formation of capacities is related to professional or personal preparation, among which are professional development and training in heritage management, which implies the reencounter of knowledge from educational agencies and is concretized in existing opportunities (strategies, plans, programs and budgets).

The objective of the article lies in the elaboration of an action plan oriented to the formation of capacities in the management of the Piedras Zoo heritage in the municipality of Manuel Tames. This study is carried out in collaboration between teachers and students of the Sociology career at the University of Guantánamo, in view of the demand for

studies on capacity building in cultural heritage management from its reproduction by the social order that generate ruptures with the hierarchical management model (top-down) that reveals the existing contradiction between the need to conserve the sculptural site and the insufficient preparation of local actors for its deployment.

This contradiction is the starting point for the adoption of actions that promote the value of the Piedras Zoo as a sculptural site of national significance, declared heritage on June 26, 1985, built from December 21, 1977 by the sculptor Ángel Iñigo Blanco de Anaya and his son Ángel Iñigo Pérez. Whose requirement is consistent with the Cuban economic and social development policy, the lines and actions of the Local Development Strategy of the Manuel Tames municipality (EDL) and its Integral Development Plan (PDI) for the period 2020-2025, at the same time that it is concretized in the objectives of the National Council of Cultural Heritage (CNPC).

This approach from the structural constructivist perspective allows us to base the internal logic of multi-stakeholder alliances during the formation of capacities in heritage management, which contextualizes the problematic situation and the need for ruptures with other forms of management based on the description of the current state, characteristics and interactions between key social actors.

## **Development**

The etymological origin of the term management refers to the action and effect of administering or managing. The traditional meaning of the term is related to business sciences and managerial activity. The systemic nature of management is manifested in its capacity to articulate processes in which the basic functions of organization, planning, execution and control are distinguished (Campdesuñer *et al.*, 2010), to which organizational theories and the criteria of efficiency and effectiveness are associated.

Another aspect of the debate is the habitual confusion of the terms “managing” and “administering” to refer to management activity. It is believed that this is the result of its evolution in relation to the development of the business sector in capitalist society with emphasis on market activity. The change towards a broad vision of management goes beyond the administrative, reinforces its creative condition and allows it to be linked to

development (González, Montejo and de Dios, 2000). Contemporary studies on management, even those based on the traditional approach; show a tendency to give hierarchy to its social component.

In it, the economic component is part of a vision of development that, without isolating the economic component, involves the cultural component. Advances regarding multi-stakeholder participation in management envision new forms based on cooperation, to describe the forms of direct participation in the processes of political regulation, in the resolution of local problems and social needs (Castro and Vázquez, 2021).

According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), cultural heritage is a product that provides societies with a capital of inherited resources that are recreated in the present in order to transmit them to future generations for their benefit, thus revaluing identity as a component of the tradition of a place. In relation to this, the training of heritage management skills enhances this demand for preparation for the management of the sculptural site. Similarly, according to Velázquez and García (2022), multi-stakeholder alliances emerge as collaborative arrangements in response to the heterogeneity of the actors.

Despite the recognized value of the Piedras Zoo as national heritage, the main publications consulted are not the result of research, but of publicity sources from official bodies of the tourism, cultural and heritage sectors, the mass media and personal web pages, except for the studies carried out by Velázquez (2017) and Iñigo (2023) who recognize the existence of attempts promoted by the local government, the national, provincial and municipal directorates of culture<sup>1</sup>, the provincial directorate of heritage, the University of Guantánamo and the Municipal University Center (CUM) in alliance with other territorial organizations, with the intention of involving people in the diversification of socio-productive activities in the Piedras Zoo.

In this order, there are studies referring to multi-stakeholder participation, which recognize the differentiated and differentiating character of collective action, called shared management or work in common (co-management), the highest level of participation that involves the preparation of the participating subjects.

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<sup>1</sup> It is noted that this sculptural site was part of the municipality of Yateras in the previous political-administrative division of the province of Guantánamo.

Therefore, the management of the Piedras Zoo heritage involves the social actors as subjects of the activity that structure their links from the conformation of their own identities regarding common interests, bearers of values that guide the intentions in the relations with the other actors in the social space, at the same time that they possess resources that allow them to interact or not, to dispose them or not to the society of which they are part.

Hence, each local social actor constitutes the atom of management, since it is he who acts in the territory by making available or not his resources and exerting his influences to produce positive or negative effects in the face of existing social needs or local problems, considering his knowledge and customs.

These customs are what Bourdieu (1997) would call habitus, understood as the set of generative matrices from which subjects perceive the world and act in it. In this way, habitus is postulated as a basic dimension of the social class of social subjects, which is the so-called incorporated class, which is the body, as opposed to the objectified class which is the position in the system of social relations according to the volume of the type of capital possessed (economic, cultural, social or symbolic).

It is a question of delegitimizing verticalist and centralized models established for management, which are obsolete in the face of superior forms of management that at present demonstrate effectiveness for themselves and therefore for development. Local cultural heritages must be managed from their own context, since they constitute an essential part of the endogenous potential of the territories.

According to the conception of Retolaza (2010) and the consulting firm Asesores para la Inversión Social (ASI) (2019), the strength of influence of an actor can be measured in terms of the probability that its actions have an impact on the modification of the intervention context: if its actions have an evident repercussion on the problem being addressed, then it is strong, if its actions have an insignificant repercussion, then it is weak. Likewise, this organization considers that an actor's capacity for modification can be measured in terms of the effect its actions have on improving or worsening the problem: it is negative if it aggravates the problem, but positive if it contributes to its resolution.

The multimodal methodological paradigm allowed an approach to the intersubjective reality from the correlation between territorial actions that structure heritage

management, which poses a change in the habitus that reproduces new forms of management with greater effectiveness, by which an approach to the context and its intersubjective interrelation in the process of capacity building in heritage management is appreciated.

The study considered a sample of 44 social actors selected under the criterion of non-probabilistic purposive sampling which allowed the identification and prioritization of key actors. For each case, the following characteristics were recorded: sector of origin, administrative scope, alignment of their objectives with Agenda 2030, influence of the actor in solving problems of the sculpture site, compatibility between their interests and the objectives of the municipal development strategy, resources offered by the actor to the local production network, requirements of the actor to be part of the actor network, requirements for accountability and direct contact.

Table 1 shows the actors according to the administrative scale of action (national, provincial, municipal) and the genealogy of the actors (civil society, private and state). The analysis of the actors is based on the scale (administrative level where the interaction occurs) and the typology of the organization, considering three categories: state (local bodies of popular power or other external or local agencies operating in the territory); private (agricultural cooperatives, peasants and private companies) and civil (non-governmental, charitable or other membership organizations).

**Table 1.** List of key stakeholders according to their level of scope and relevance in the management of Piedras Zoo's heritage.

| <b>Relevance/scope</b> | <b>National</b> | <b>Provincial</b> | <b>Municipal</b> |
|------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|------------------|
| <b>Civil Society</b>   | 0               | 1                 | 7                |
| <b>State actors</b>    | 5               | 10                | 20               |
| <b>Private Actors</b>  | 0               | 0                 | 1                |

**Source:** Self elaboration

Of the 14 actors interviewed at the provincial level, six are strong positives and eight are weak positives according to the impact of their actions on the transformation of problems or needs. Of the 24 actors interviewed at the municipal level, nine have a strong impact and 15 are characterized as weak. With this information, a database of the social factors that have an impact on capacity building in the management of the Piedras Zoo heritage,

which are relevant for the implementation of integrated educational actions, was constructed.

In general, according to data in Figure 1, 34% of the actors have a strong impact and 66% express weakness in the use of their capacities. In this case, the intermediation role played by the decentralized actor 'Municipal Government' is a strong positive dynamizer, since it facilitates the flow of existing resources at the scales of distribution between the state, private and civil society sectors.

It was possible to identify that at the same scale the flow of exchanges between actors is differentiated and can be deficient, as in the case of the Technical Team of Monuments and Sites in the locality and the Piedras Zoo Heritage Guiding Office, despite the existence of an institutional structure of municipal and provincial scope, with a predominance of state institutions and the multisectoral diversity of local actors, which are not sufficient to ensure strong positive links.

**Source:** Self elaboration

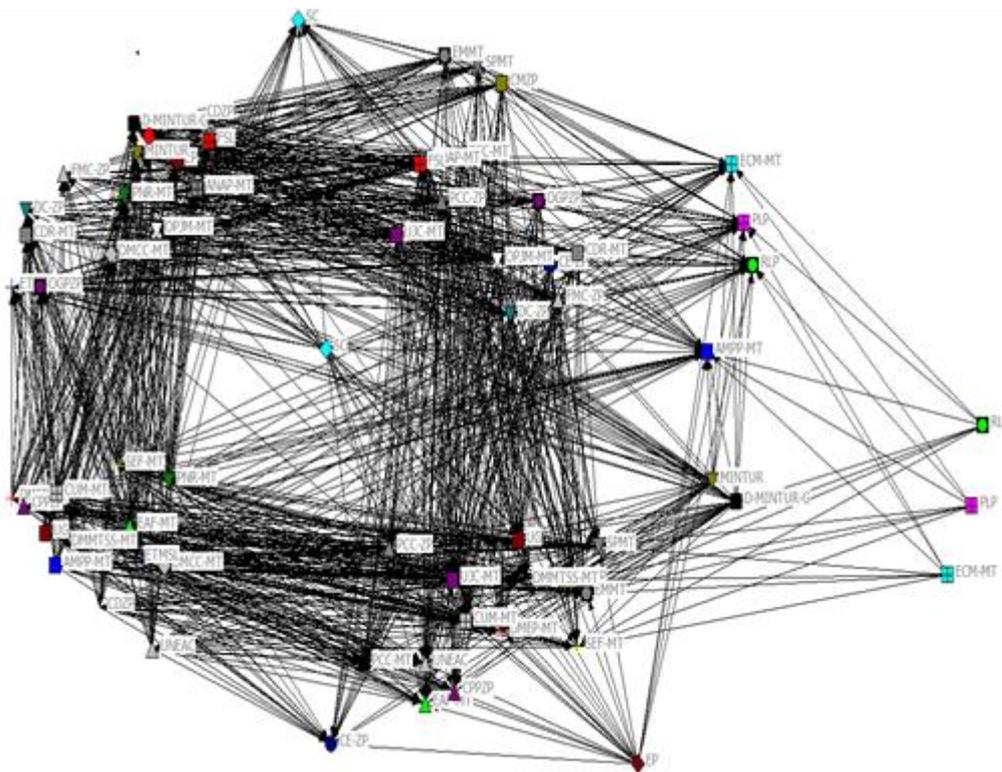


**Figure 1.** Relationship between levels of influence per stakeholder and their reach

The analysis of the structure associated with the network of actors between scales and sectors made it possible to identify key actors and gaps that can characterize initiatives to promote forms of cultural heritage management. National policies can provide an enabling institutional environment for the management of this heritage, although the actors that implement such policies and local initiatives do not efficiently and effectively guide their actions in an integrated manner from horizontal relationships.

The results corroborate that there are initiatives, policies and instruments at the territorial level that require capacity building in heritage management in order to implement educational actions based on collaborative relationships, as can be seen in the current structure of the local network of key actors with significant impact on heritage management. In relation to this, Figure 2 presents the capacity building network (structures, roles and positions) across scales and social sectors, as well as identifying the key actors.

**Source:** self elaboration starting from Netdraw del software Ucinet 6.0 para Microsoft Windows



**Figure 2.** Local network for capacity building in heritage management Piedras Zoo

A scarce presence of actors with strong positive incidence was observed, which expresses weaknesses in the interacting relationships at the different levels and sectors of organization, among the scales of information distribution, in which the actors with direct incidence are oriented towards the provision of gastronomic, commercial and educational services, while the degree of connectivity with the actors whose social purpose is the conservation and revitalization of the sculpture site is lower, while the external actors express a greater flow of information and exchange of resources for this purpose.

It was possible to identify that even within the same scale; the flow of information between actors can be deficient, despite the existence of an institutional structure mediated by a legal framework that regulates collaborative relationships aimed at heritage management. Thus, the existence of state institutions at the national level and of local actors are not sufficient to ensure an adequate flow of information and direct involvement of key actors in integrated actions. This made it possible to identify hierarchies around capacity building in heritage management related to local development, based on:

- The mediation quality of capacity building between heritage management and society,
- The recognition of the multi-stakeholder network as a support for the effectiveness of heritage management,
- The representation of a conceptual body and practical tools that allow the formation of educational and identity links (heritage-society relationship),
- The development of a heritage product that guarantees the management and application of research results at the undergraduate and graduate levels, as well as innovation in the processes of its conservation and dissemination,
- The development of a heritage interpretation program that promotes the significance of the sculptural site, its public services and the traditions to which it is related,
- The installation of interpretive signs of the sculptural works at various points in the territory and within the area of the sculpture site,
- The incorporation of content related to heritage management in the universe of curricular programs for the training of professionals in the territory, linked to interpretation, restoration, content design, technology and guides to historic sites,
- The systematic promotion through conventional media and digital networks, including television spots,
- The coordination of educational actions at different educational levels that include the tour to the sculpture site.

For the planning of the actions it is necessary to coordinate the central aspects in the orientation to the identified key actors, influenced by the conditions for participation, the

existence of situations of exclusion in the decision making, as well as the need of advisories for the establishment of communication channels that facilitate the implementation of actions oriented to the conservation and revitalization of the sculpture site. The purpose of the implementation of this plan is synthesized in the analysis of the structure of the local network and in the state of the multi-stakeholder links taking into account the relevance of the Zoológico de Piedras sculpture site, therefore it is recommended:

- To the government of the Manuel Tames municipality, to promote educational actions among the key actors directly and indirectly involved in the management of the sculptural site.
- To the Provincial Heritage Council, to deepen research and specialized advice to key factors involved in the implementation of educational actions during the heritage management process.
- To the governmental group of local development management: to promote educational actions among the social actors of the popular council in order to improve the system of popular participation in integrated community actions. To carry out educational dynamics in schools, workplaces and localities to contribute to the formation of a habitus on the significance of heritage management for local development.

## **Conclusions**

The analysis of capacity building in the management of the Piedras Zoo heritage, carried out by teachers and students of the Sociology career of the University of Guantánamo, expresses that the educational actions allow the preparation of the key actors who participate in the socio-productive and heritage conservation activities organized in the sculptural site.

The rationale of capacity building in heritage management shows the need for educational actions that contribute to the understanding, interpretation and management of this space,

whose duty is to bequeath it to future generations as an essential part of historical memory. The understanding of the interacting relational nodes oriented to the formation of capacities in heritage management highlights the significance of the sculptural site Zoológico de Piedras in the daily construction of its relevance for local development, which facilitates the preparation of the actors members of the local network and the recognition of their roles in the implementation of the actions.

The research allowed an approach to the state of the partnerships built by the actors during the capacity building in heritage management, which conditions the multi-stakeholder and intersectoral preparation for local development. This view corroborates that the implementation of educational actions with the direct participation of key stakeholders contributes to the reproduction of multi-stakeholder alliances that contribute to heritage management.