

# The ecomuseum as a space for the activation of governance processes. Co-management of heritage in responsible tourism management.

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**Abstract:** An ecomuseum orients its conservation, formation and reproduction of identity and patrimonial tasks based on the proximity to the territory and the population area it serves. This entails a flexible management system that adapts to contextual specificities of this socio-cultural and geographical area, empowering local populations to govern themselves in relation to a common project. This study explores the activation of governance processes in ecomuseums, The Cultural Project of Community Development of La Aldea on the island of Gran Canaria (Canary Islands, Spain) is taken as a case study, related to manners and traditional work. Methodologically, interviews, informal conversations and direct observation have been conducted to determine the presence of governance in the management. To assess the opinion of the visitor, questionnaires were made. From the analysis it is possible to confirm that co-management, in accordance with governance provides better decision-making in the formation of the cultural tourism product.

**Keywords:** Ecomuseum; Responsible tourism management; Governance; Case study; Identity; Community development.

## El ecomuseo como espacio para la activación de procesos de gobernanza. Co-gestión del patrimonio en la gestión responsable del turismo

**Resumen:** Un ecomuseo orienta su conservación, formación y reproducción de tareas identitarias y patrimoniales en función de la proximidad al territorio y sus poblaciones. Esto implica un sistema de gestión flexible que se adapte a las especificidades contextuales del área sociocultural y geográfica, empoderando a las poblaciones locales para gobernarse a sí mismas en relación a un proyecto común. Este estudio explora la activación de los procesos de gobernanza en los ecomuseos, se toma como caso de estudio el Proyecto Cultural de Desarrollo Comunitario de La Aldea en la isla de Gran Canaria (Canarias, España), relacionado con las costumbres y tradiciones. Metodológicamente, se han realizado entrevistas, conversaciones informales y observación directa para determinar la presencia de gobernanza en la gestión. Para valorar la opinión del visitante se realizaron cuestionarios. A partir del análisis se puede constatar que la cogestión, acorde con la gobernanza, proporciona una mejor toma de decisiones en la formación del producto turístico cultural.

**Palabras Clave:** Ecomuseo; Gestión responsable del turismo; Gobernanza; Caso de estudio; Identidad; Desarrollo comunitario.

## 1. Introduction

The high cultural content on offer in museums and other cultural assets, has made these institutions develop their capabilities to manage environmental challenges better (Lebek et al., 2006), but also in

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terms of social challenges. Due to the constant innovation in management, recently ecomuseums challenge a single accepted definition (Davis and Corsane, 2014: 119). It is understood here that ecomuseums are characterized by identifying, in a given region, the traditional living environment through cultural and natural heritage valued to be protected and preserved (Elliot, 2006). In this sense, and based on the Declaration of Intentions of the Long Net Workshop, Trento (Italy, 2004), the ecomuseum is taken as a form of dynamic community agreement by which heritage is preserved, interpreted and managed for sustainable development.

These agreements are the basis for the implementation of governance mechanisms, with the common objective of the social, environmental and economic development of the local population. This common process of management in heritage (Davis, 1997: 199; Haveri et al., 2009) involves the responsibility among the actors of the cultural resource, promoting multiple uses of heritage.

Responsible tourism is based on sustainability, but without becoming a specific or thematic tourism typology (Idelhadj, Rivera and Rodríguez, 2012). More than a product, it is a series of commitments, sensitivities, and responsibilities on the actions that affect both the tourist and the tour operators and intermediaries and the public administrations involved. All must, following these principles, recognize the central role of the local population and the control that it can practice in the tourism development processes of their territory (Santana-Talavera, 2008). This way of conceiving tourism has a social aspect that implies respecting, promoting and developing local cultures and protecting them from cultural homogenization, over-marketing and overexploitation.

Responsible tourism (RT), as a tourist action linked to the movement of ecomuseums, constitutes in itself a social movement that involves a niche market (Reverté and Guix, 2013). The application of such actions on a territory, in addition to contributing positively to the conservation of the natural and cultural heritage, promotes memorable experiences and better perception of the places both for the hosts and for the visitors. The RT, as an attitude, tends to minimize unwanted socio-cultural, socio-economic and environmental impacts, to improve the welfare of host populations, to involve these populations in decisions that affect their lives and future opportunities, and to improve understanding of the local culture by tourists. This responsible vision must be articulated on some notions of management, with governance being the tool to involve the local population in decisions about cultural heritage.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the activation of governance processes in ecomuseums, starting from the involvement of different agents in their development, establishing the level of participation and co-management of the local population in the administration of the resources of the ecomuseum. For this purpose, the Cultural Project of Community Development of La Aldea (PDCLA) on the island of Gran Canaria (Canary Islands, Spain) has been chosen as a case study. Based on interviews, informal conversations, questionnaires and direct observation, the application of co-management of heritage is determined as an aspect of responsible management.

For this research, co-management in the administration of the museum is conceived as the set of decisions and activities in terms of conservation and sustainable development of the environment; assumes the principle of community management. In this way, it constitutes a management paradigm with respect to the traditional museum administration (depending on its management model).

Otherwise, it is hypothesized that co-management, as a form of application of governance, is shown as an effective tool for the sharing of responsibilities and competencies in the management of resources, being sustainable over time and contributing to overcoming crisis intermediate (economic and social).

## **2. Co-management as a strategy for governance in the ecomuseum**

Governance, as a negotiation and cooperation mechanism between different actors (at the private or public level, and from the individual, business or institutional point of view), has gained prominence in recent years in various sectors of society. Unesco (2005, p.78) proposes governance in the heritage sector as maintaining the balance between social and economic objectives and between individual and communal goals. The purpose of the governance framework is to promote the efficient use of resources and to demand responsibility for the administration of those resources. What is sought is to align as much as possible the interests of individuals, cultural heritage and society. For the context of museums, the adaptation that Legget (2006) makes for this area has been taken: "The Stakeholders of a museum

are individuals or organizations that have an interest or influence in the capacity of a museum to achieve its objectives”.

This mechanism has been studied in other areas, such as in the context of global intellectual property policies, understood as a set of agreements and legal systems, which largely regulate the flow of information on the Internet (Souza et al., 2014), or in environmental policies (Durant, 2017; Newin et al., 2018; Videira et al., 2018). It is in the case of museums where there is special interest to link the diversity of actors in the formation of strategies for a common social, economic and cultural development (Cosmin, 2018, Elsorady, 2018, Loach et al., 2017, Zuned, 2018).

A fundamental challenge in achieving governance is to involve a diversity of partners and gain legitimacy (Huxham and Vangen, 2005, Vangen and Huxham, 2012). The very attraction to collaborate is to take advantage of this diversity of capabilities and disparate resources, generate new solutions and synergies between partners in response to this spectrum of diversity of challenges. Governance is discussed in the literature from different dimensions.

First, by the degree of collaboration in the short or long term (Keast et al., 2007). Secondly, the degree of formality and rank of centralization, from a loose network to a strong association with its own legal entity, administration, organization and staff (Bryson et al., 2006; Provan and Kenis, 2008). Third, there are systems of accountability that clarify who in the association is responsible and for what (Geddes and Shand, 2013). Finally, there is the value of openness in the degree of participation of the members and clarity of assigned roles (Huxham and Vangen, 2000), through people who represent partners without pre-established role assignments.

The term “co-management” (also referred to as participatory management, co-administration, or shared management) constitutes an “institutional arrangement between the local users of a territory or set of natural resources and / or groups interested in their conservation, and the public agencies in charge of the administration of these resources. It implies both a distribution of responsibilities and competencies, and a clear definition between the exercise of public authority and the patterns of use, access, control and subsequent management of resources” (Giro, 1998). The same author mentions that co-management is essentially a “partnership” between parties that share an interest, a responsibility and a vision about the sustainable use of a resource. These alliances must include various sectors. In the field of museums, co-management involves the participatory use of communities in areas related to eco-cultural spaces or in the process of musealization (Adán Alfaro, 2010; Janes 2016). This eco-management has the challenge of reaching agreements between the various economic sectors that make up the productive framework in a given area.

### *Challenges of intersectoral alliances*

An intersectoral partnership (a museum) involves the public and private sectors and third parties that work together to manage resources and capacities and share decision-making in the medium and long term, or to address a complex social problem (Selsky and Parker, 2005; Bryson et al., 2006). The existing literature on intersectoral alliances is very diverse, and depends specifically on the specific sector (Huxham and Vangen, 2005, Bryson et al., 2006).

In a cross-sectional sector, such as culture, partnerships take time to come to fruition and delivery is often slow, and often many intersectoral partnerships do not achieve their objectives. The literature on the cross-sector on partnerships can be summarized in relation to three particular challenges: governance, strategy and leadership.

Previous studies characterize the nature of the strategy as multilevel, interconnected, dynamic, and as a result, with unintended consequences (2006, Seitanidi, 2008, Clarke and Fuller, 2010, Vangen and Huxham, 2012). That is why many authors emphasize the need to negotiate an agreement on a purpose, but there is a division in the literature on the best way to overcome this problem (a fast and slower way).

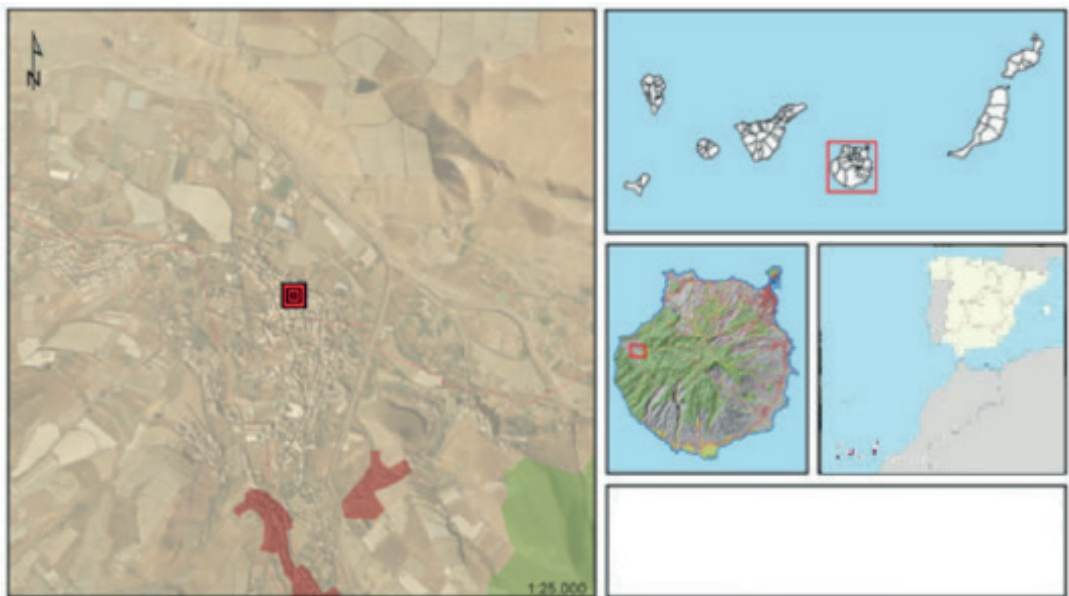
The initial challenge of leadership is to create partnership (Crosby, 2010; Klijn et al., 2010), which is helped by an organization or coordinator, who is powerful, credible, committed in the long term, capable of rethinking and raising the profile of the problem, and has a large capital (Waddock and Post, 1991; Bryson et al., 2006). Once the intersectoral partnership has been initiated, leaders need to balance the number and diversity of people involved, between a more democratic one (Bryson et al., 2006) or selective approach (Klijn et al., 2010). When conflicts arise, leaders must have an essential role of mediation (Crosby and Bryson, 2010; Klijn et al., 2010).

In the literary review, the need to have a strong individual leader is highlighted, either from the public (or private) sector based on authority is emphasized (Ansell and Gash, 2008, Crosby, 2010, Geddes and Shand, 2013) or a private social entrepreneur (Waddock and Post, 1991).

### 3. Case study: The Community Project of La Aldea

The PDCLA emerges in a very specific context in which many of the reasons that led to its creation are determined by the special geographical conditions in which it is located. La Aldea de San Nicolás is located in the west of the island of Gran Canaria (Map 1) and is surrounded by a rugged orography. Previously, communications with the outside were made by sea. Its relief, eroded and very abrupt, is divided by numerous ravines. The weather is dry with a semiarid landscape, has determined the proliferation of small core scattered throughout the municipality looking for the wettest areas, flat ravines and their heights crowned by extensive pine forests. (López García, 2003, Sánchez González, Suárez Espino and Moya Otero, 2002). The municipality of La Aldea de San Nicolás is about 50 kilometers from the tourist area and 63 or 111 kilometers according to the chosen route, from the capital of the island, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. The population is of 7,613 inhabitants (2017). The cultivation of tomatoes is the main activity of the municipality (Cabildo de Gran Canaria, 2018).

**Map 1: Location of the Community Project of La Aldea**



The authors.

The Cultural Project of Community Development La Aldea (PDCLA), in Gran Canaria, begins when two teachers from the Public School Cuermeja, José Pedro Suárez and Lidia Sánchez, decide to incorporate popular culture into the activities of the educational center where they worked. This happened in 1980 in the School Residence of La Aldea de San Nicolás de Tolentino. The teachers' concern for achieving coexistence was accompanied by the idea of reducing the negative effects that the prolonged separation of their family environment could have on the residents. In this way, a commendable didactic and ethnographic experience emerges (Sánchez González, Suárez Espino and Moya Otero, 2002).

**Image 1: Visitors entering the Pottery Center**



Photo: the authors

**Image 2: Visitors at the Gofio's Grinder**



Photo: the authors

This experience of ethnographic participation has been recognized nationally and internationally for its cultural and educational values, but mainly for its concern for the recovery and transmission of intangible heritage. UNESCO considers intangible heritage traditions that are transmitted orally or through gestures and are modified over time through a process of collective recreation, with each individual being the patron of their own community. In short, PDCLA has been considered by the International Scientific Committee of Museums, as “the most important living museum in Europe” (Sánchez González and Suárez Espino, 2006).

### Description

There are various activities that make up the PDCLA: the Living Museums, the handicraft workshops, the native sports, the Regional Annual Folklore Days, the participation in popular events (Auto de los Reyes Magos, Rancho de Ánimas), etc. Since its creation, the Community Development Project has created numerous living museums where you can enjoy traditions (Sánchez González, Suárez Espino and Moya Otero, 2002).

**Image 3: Sketch of the distribution of museums in the PDCLA**



Source: <http://www.proyectolaaldea.com/>

They started with La Gañanía, a traditional farm from the early twentieth century with original rooms that show the ways of life of rural culture, and the Water Mill to grind the Gofio<sup>1</sup>, a building of the late nineteenth century that has been rebuilt (Sánchez González, Suárez Espino and Moya Otero, 2002). Then, other museums were added with the trades and activities of the town in the 20th century: the Shop, the Music Museum, the Pottery Center, the Barber Shop, the School, the Tomato Store, the Shoe Store, the Rural Medicine, the Smithy, and the Butcher Shop (Suarez Moreno and others, 2005). The last two spaces incorporated into the Project are the Museum of the Shepherd (2014) and the Museum of Traditional Clothing (2016).

### Image 4: Museum of Rural Medicine



Photo: the authors

#### *Permanent and temporary offer*

You can make three visits or different routes: a first “short”, a second “medium” and a third “long”. This route is also configurable in terms of spaces.

### Image 5: Music Museum



Photo: the authors

As management aspects, schedules can be arranged with the organization, usually adapted to the needs of the group (it is requested that they are at least 10 - 12 people, there is no maximum, although groups larger than 25 are not recommended). The entry price is free. The museum has brochures (only in Spanish and digital), panels and posters (Spanish), guided tours (Spanish) and does not have videos or projections.

The Project is formed as a non-profit association, led by an assembly that is coordinated by a president, a vice president, a treasurer, a secretary and a vocal. The assembly is the form of government in the Project. They meet twice every week (Tuesday and Thursday). Normally fifty people meet, the managerial positions are assigned by means of proposals. Votes are taken to make decisions. There is a statute and a memory of association. Decisions are made in the assembly, people reach an agreement easily. People delegate to other people.

The annual income € 15,000 (2017) comes from a grant from the FEDAC: Foundation for the Ethnography and Development of the Canarian Crafts (Autonomous Foundation belonging to the Cabildo de Gran Canaria). For a long time they were not assigned or registered. Now they make up an association. As for the staff, the number of those directly involved is 45 volunteers. For some events, over 200 participants are exceeded.

The Project does not have a cafe or restaurant, nor a souvenir shop, there are no staff hired for cleaning, security or guided tours. As a Project policy, they never talk about bad relationships with governments. There is a collaboration agreement with the education council of the Government of the Canary Islands. There is another agreement with Fedac, to be able to pay rents and food for the animals. There is no agreement with the local council. There is no relationship (for decision making or financing) with private companies. For example, if you have to go to a congress, the project or sometimes members have to pay all expenses.

#### *Governance (principles and criteria) and actors in the ecomuseum*

The Project complies with the 35 criteria of the 5 principles of Governance: Legitimacy and voice, Management (strategic vision), Efficiency and efficiency (performance), Responsibility and transparency (accountability) and Justice (compliance with the law). Some aspects to be highlighted in relation to Governance are: People want to take off problems. They delegate decisions to other people. There is discussion; the decisions to be made are shared. There is an annual report where the objectives of the following year are established. Those responsible believe that there is diversity and effectiveness in this project, as well as a great work of learning, what is done and what is to be done. There has never been distrust with this management model. The only problems could be political and money. There have never been legal problems. The human group (volunteers) is the main stakeholder in this project. All are real characters and each one has a specific role in the group.

Therefore the strategy is to give prominence to those who really have it, that each one is a protagonist within its scope, for example the carpenter will always be the person best seen within the carpentry. It is not possible to supplant protagonisms of anyone. The people who make up the project are those who possess the attributes of power, legitimacy and urgency, all without exception, since without them the project could not be continued. Each of these people represents an important part of a collective project that is the total of knowledge and individual contributions, both material and immaterial.

#### **4. Methodology**

The purpose of this research is to explore the activation of governance processes in the Cultural Project of Community Development of La Aldea, starting from the involvement of different agents in its development, establishing the level of participation and co-management of the local population in the administration of the resources of the Project. For this, a qualitative research strategy focused on the case study has been chosen (Eisenhardt 2002, Hamel et al., 1993, Simons, 2011, Yacuzzi, 2005, Yin 2003). The selection of the case was made, after a review of the island museums (Gran Canaria, Spain) and determination of their areas of competence, taking into account the best existing ecomuseum reference on the island of Gran Canaria, which receives more than four thousand visits annual (Table nº1). Subsequent applications, at least partially, follow the work of Adie and Hall (2017), which perform a comparative analysis of three case studies.



**Image 6: Making the cheese in the “Gañanía”**

Photo: the authors

For this study, a qualitative approach is taken (Shaw & Ivens, 2002). The application of this perspective is applied by analyzing the responses of the questionnaires, determining the sample according to the degree of saturation detected in open responses (Thomas and James, 2006), and contrasting this information with that obtained through other techniques such as the semi-structured in-depth interview, the conversational interview and the direct observation.

**Table n° 1: Distribution of visitors in the case study.**

Visits (2019)	TOTAL	Students and Groups%	Local %	National %	International%	Activities %
P.C. Aldea	4.600	55	15	10	15	5

The authors.

Starting from the problems highlighted in the theoretical framework of the research, and the objectives that focus it, a guide questionnaire was prepared for the interviews (in-depth and conver-

sational) deciding that the informants would be allowed to introduce topics of interest, conducted by the interviewer at the right moments. This strategy allows, beyond the information previously considered relevant, the informants provide nuances that were revealed in each case as inflection points in the configuration of the network, its interpretation and the consequent application in the management of the museum.

For the interviews, it was considered to take those responsible for management as key informants. Establishing a semi-structured guide that raised 14 topics or issues of interest. The digital audio recording of each one was carried out, favoring a more exact interpretation (Yin, 2003) and allowing to take clarifying and complementary notes, useful at the time of the transcription. With the informed consent and the confidentiality due to the interviewees, the protection of the audios obtained was guaranteed.

The conversational interviews conducted with the volunteers, complemented by direct observation, served to determine the objectives and hypotheses of the present study. These techniques contribute especially to the qualitative determination of the degrees of relative importance of each of them in the management of the museum, guiding the interpretation of results in the analysis of indicators made with the Caqdas.

In a pre-interview phase, a questionnaire was carried out on a random sample, determined by saturation, of 100 visitors (table 2).

**Table n° 2: Period, areas and sociodemographic characteristics of the survey**

Period	29/7/2016 - 21/12/2016		
Sample	100 (intentional sampling)	Data collection system	Paper
Age	< 18 years: 7 % 18 - 30 years: 16 % 31 - 50 years: 37 % 51 - 70 years: 32 % > 70 years: 6 % NA: 2 %	Gender	Woman 55% Man 44 % NA: 1 %

The authors

The questionnaire was designed to assess the opinion of visitors, distributed in 14 questions: 1) country of residence, 2) type of accommodation, 3) how it has arrived at the museum, 4) with whom visits the museum, 5) age, 6) gender, 7) reasons for the visit, 8) how knew the museum, 9) guided visit (quality and time), 10) assessing characteristics (treatment, environment, presentation, quality and usefulness, learning, interest, accessibility, signage, price of tickets, services, and waiting time, 11) quality - price, 12) aspects that "they liked", 13) aspects that "they did not like" and 14) suggestions.

To analyze the content and proceed to the coding of the last three, due to the wide possibility of answers, since the questions were open, eight categories have been established in terms of their content, taking as reference the aspects of the museum that establishes the Permanent Laboratory of Public of Museums of Spain (Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport, 2013, pp. 95-98): 1) exhibition, 2) communication and information, 3) operation, 4) conservation, 5) facilities, 6) staff, 7) promotion and 8) others.

To perform the qualitative analysis and make it effective (Gibbs, 2012), data management has been efficient, coherent and systematic. A computer-aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) was used, specifically Nvivo 10.

The first step taken in Nvivo has been to import the information for each one of the case studies: internal elements (questionnaires, interviews and observational notes) and external elements (taken from the social networks and web pages), the latter with the Ncapture tool.

The second step with Nvivo has been coding (gathering material by subject, topic or case) and creating nodes (sections that allow information to be collected and searched by patterns). For the codification of contents, nodes have been created, codified, with the "automatic codification based on patterns", then all the nodes and documents that make up the same are actively linked in each project.

The third step has been to perform queries to search and analyze words or phrases in the resources or nodes, for example, those words that appear most frequently. You can also ask questions and find patterns based on the classification, check the congruence of project classifications and review progress. A project was carried out in the analysis of the data entitled "PC La Aldea".

The fourth step is to explore data with graphs, models or other visualization techniques. This serves to help explore trends, test theories and make sense of what happens in the resource material. You can create models and charts to make connections between the data, not just to plan the project. The graphs show how the elements of the project are connected, for example, to see which elements are connected to a selected resource or node.

## 5. Results

The need to correlate the intention of the participation process, and by extension the principles of governance, with the specific characteristics of the museums, is shown as a relevant aspect due to the socio-economic and identity implications that these cultural implications have on the linked populations. The identification of the main actors (volunteers) and secondary actors (linked to the Project), both real and potential that have the capacity to influence the network and, to take part in the agreements reached on the cultural offer, has been decisive. The traditional approach in the management of museums is, generally and with exceptions, incapable of evaluating the effects that the incorporation of new agents and new forms of management would have on the strategy concerning the agents involved or with the capacity to be. With the tools used (direct observation, interviews with the staff of the museums and questionnaires to the public, which triangulate the information (Patton, 2002), the results obtained with Nvivo will be interpreted, from the case study treated.

### *Management model and its limitations*

It should be noted that in the case of the Community Project of La Aldea, the projection of image and the consequent capture of the public is tremendously intuitive and not professional, (Table 3). In this case, based on local volunteering and the assembly regime, it meets twice a week (usually about forty people, with delegation of votes among its members), taking decisions on the functioning and even new projects (each project with a coordinator) in a participatory manner in the majority system. Achieved leadership, individually proposed but accepted by a majority, faces the structural challenge of obtaining financing.

**Image 7: Visitors in “the Store”**

Photo: the authors

It could be observed that the final execution of its commitments of conservation, diffusion and improvement of the uses of the cultural heritage, will be largely framed in the distribution of economic resources. However, the structure that delimits both the internal agreements and the relations with their environment, in a broad sense, contribute in large part to the degree of agility in the execution of projects. The Community Project of La Aldea, is capable of executing small (in duration and target audience) samples and museum activities almost self-managed and self-financed by their promoters.

**Table 3: Characteristics of the management model of the Community Project of La Aldea.**

Characteristics	Community Project of La Aldea
Ownership	Private
Financing	Dependent on grants, agreements and donations
Board of directors	Self-government Only submitted to the endorsement given by the assembly
Staff	Volunteers. Everyone is involved in what they know and can without compensation
Staff number	45 fixed volunteers Approx. 200 eventual volunteers
Financing (2017)	15.000 €
Funding source	Grant from the Foundation for Ethnography and Development of the Canarian Crafts (FEDAC, Cabildo de Gran Canaria)
Decision making model	Assemblyman. Selected executive positions.
Donations	Habitual
Public-private relationship	With companies it is practically non-existent.
Compliance with 35 governance criteria	Perform all criteria

The authors.

The representation of the organizational structure and financing makes a gradient that ranges from the professionalization of the activity to emotional voluntarism perceptible. It is worth noting the commitment of each member of a community with a project that is taken for granted through its proposal and demonstration, each one contributing their time and concrete experience.

The analysis of the ecomuseum shows a lack of relations with the insular business framework. This need of relationships is largely due to the lack of strategic vision (and commercial responsibilities) of the Project, but also due to the voluntary nature of its members. Canarias focuses its economy on the provision of services, receiving about 16 million tourists in 2017, of which the island of Gran Canaria has more than 4 million. These visitors are accommodated in 164 hotels and 425 non-hotel establishments, but there should also be a multiplicity of transport companies (buses and rental vehicles), gastronomy and catering, leisure services (especially travel agencies and tour guides), etc. The direct involvement of companies in the activity of heritage, where the culture is considered as a complement to the trip (only 2.6% declare it as a reason to choose the Canary Islands election), shows the lack of interest shown by the promoters of the heritage.

It is true that the performance of a museum / heritage site is due, initially and legislatively, in the first place, to local populations, although the definition of the local in a globalized world is quite uncertain (Borja and Castells, 2006; Catrina, 2015). Governance, as a mechanism of democratic participation (Mercer, 2005), is a non-parity commitment to the complex areas of economic, human and sociocultural power relations, where citizens are partners, stakeholders and actors. In principle, any museum, when making museum decisions and social extension, must take into account that the visitor plays an important role. This without forgetting its economic responsibility for the territory and, therefore, its commitment to visibility, in this case, to residents and tourists.

**Image 8: Visitors in the “Gañanía”**

Photo: the authors

In this analysis, the Project's difficulty of belonging to tourist circuits (9% tourists) is notorious, but it is necessary to clarify the territorial context. But, in addition, the Community Project is practically invisible both in tourism promotion and for the island population. To the oblivion and difficulty of structural and historical communications of this municipality, the patrimonial is also added.

**Image 9: Museum of the “School”**

Photo: the authors

Trying to measure the satisfaction of the visit, respondents were asked to rate a number of aspects on a likert scale 10 (treatment, environment, presentation, clarity and usefulness of content, learning, interest, accessibility, signaling, entries, services, time waiting), obtaining an average of 8.88. The aspects most valued were learning (9.5) and treatment (9.4), while the worst rated were accessibility (8.7) and services (6.5). These data can, taken systematically, help to improve the project's commitments, giving voice to visitors. However, the most notable is the number and quality of the comments or free responses, which show the interest of the visitors for intervening in the process of patrimonial representation.

**Table 4: Characterization and opinion of the visitors of the Community Project of La Aldea.**

Characterization of the visitor	Cultural Community Project of La Aldea (n = 100)
Visitors	Students and groups: 60%, Local: 15%, National: 10%, International: 15%
	9% tourists 80% residents
How do they get there?	75% excursion
Knowledge of the museum	Association or group Friends and family
Outstanding motivation	“improve knowledge” 27% “it is one of the main attractions” 17%
Satisfaction (0 - 10)	8.88
Free comments	162 comments, of which 48 are suggestions Positive 101 Negative 13

The authors.

Beyond requesting improvements in services, such as restaurants or souvenir shops (which are still important in these heritage and leisure contexts), visitors indicate that they want other issues, for example, that the communication of contents needs to be adapted (videos and brochures). The problem lies in the lack of professionalism and resources to have a team responsible for communication. In fact, the brochure available for non-school audiences does not meet the appropriate characteristics for the communication of patrimonial content.

**Image 10: A group of students learning to plant in the “Gañanía”**



Photo: the authors



### *Governance in the Community Development Project*

Governance as a mechanism to exercise power can be established through 5 principles and 35 criteria (Aggarwal et al 2016, Graham et al., 2003). In the case of the Community Project of La Aldea, it has been determined that all the principles and criteria are met.

In the Project, the volunteer, conformed in assembly, is the main stakeholder of the patrimonial action. It is a group of people who, since 1980, have tried to transmit ethnographic values that are considered part of the tradition, forming a living ensemble of museum representations. From a stable nucleus, between 200 and 300 people meet in a flexible manner, to which specific roles and functions are granted. In a long time and with a diversity of opinions, the responsibility of managing personal relationships has relapsed on the elected leaders. The people who make up the Project are those who possess the attributes of power, legitimacy and urgency, all without exception, without them the project could not be continued.

**Image 11: Volunteer explaining the gofio grind**



Photo: the authors

### *The project from the point of view of the volunteers*

The interviews were conducted with 10 volunteers from the most active of the Project, aged between 66 and 86 years, four women and six men. With the interviews, it is corroborated that the Project has been beneficial for the community, since it has provided economic and social benefits. On a personal level, the volunteers have brought joy, will and entertainment. It follows that the main contributions have been the recovery of lost or near-lost traditions and the learning experiences of the volunteers themselves. Some of these traditions are folklore (the Rancho de Animas) and dances, as well as the pursuit of activities after the retirement of their respective jobs. Many volunteers declare to feel happiness, pride, affection or devotion for their work in the Project, as well as not feel obligations when participating. There is variety in the motivation to participate in the Project, although the highlight is to dance or to sing. Some volunteers highlight their role as part of the exhibition in museums: grinding, sowing, explaining the carpentry or packaging tomatoes. All volunteers show the sensation of feeling useful in their participation. There are various contributions that highlight personal level, such as gain health or maintain friendships.

The interviewees emphasize that everything is important in the Project, although more specifically the relationships established with the volunteers and the conservation of the tangible and intangible assets of the same. The totality of the participants in the interview expressed that they would not change anything of the Project, as well as that when they have a proposal they propose it in the assembly.

Although all volunteers understand that the Project can grow with more visitors and visibility, they consider that they can not be overwhelmed to attend large masses of visitors. They believe that it can be given more promotion from the public administration. All the interviewees think that it would not be necessary to professionalize all or part of the Project, and that if this happened, they would stop participating in it.

The problems, although they do not stand out, are mainly the lack of economic aid to carry out the maintenance of the museums, as well as the loss of volunteers. The volunteers understand that the Project must be maintained with the people who are joining. The public institutions have the possibility of helping to maintain the current model, buying the private spaces and transferring the management to the assembly, the property would be municipal.

### *The perception of the local traders about The Project*

It follows from the informal conversations held with the heads of ten commercial establishments near the center of La Aldea de San Nicolás (where the PDCLA is located), that the realization of the various activities carried out by the Project has a significant impact on positive in their businesses. The totality of the people with whom these conversations took place, shows their support to it, and declares that since its inception, it has been fruitful both from a social point of view, but above all economic.

In terms of sustainability over time of the Project, there is a diversity of opinions. Approximately half of the traders surveyed, question the viability and long-term maintenance (10 years as a reference) of the Project. The main reason they show is the high age of the majority of volunteers who currently participate in living museums, and they fear that it can not be sustainable for several years. However, the other half does not question the social sustainability, which would imply economic sustainability of the Project (including museums and other representations), and consider that other people will assume responsibilities, and that therefore they will continue with the activities that so far, obviously, those who have doubts develop, if they hope to keep the visits to the environment, since they benefit economically from the visitor.

## **6. Conclusiones**

The PDCLA volunteers think that this model is the most appropriate for the management, involving more people, especially concerning young people. The mission (short term) of the Project is to continue growing, since those involved understand that it is not all over. While the vision (the future projection) is to perpetuate in time the culture generated by the different forms of life.

As conclusions to the case study that has been selected, three aspects have been determined, which are generalizable in other ecomuseums: a) the high emotional load, so the word predominates over the texts. While in other museums you have to keep quiet and obviously nothing can be touched, in

**Image 12: Visitor at the Tomato Packaging Store**

Photo: the authors

this model, they want people to talk and touch the artifacts as much as possible, b) people who are in the museum spaces, sometimes, are who have lived in some way in each of those places, that makes it different from others, c) the altruistic side of the people that make up this museum.

The success of a museum should not be measured as that of a company, in terms of economic profit for itself or the institution that sponsors it (Barbieri et al., 2017, *Evemuseografía*, 2017), but is based on social utility that can contribute to the community of which it is depository. It is not efficient to make a direct inference between success and number of visitors, while that figure would have to be weighted with respect to the capacity to call (connected with the projected image) and the influence on the institutions, as well as the level of satisfaction of its employees. Other indicators would be the impact it generates on the quality of the community's scientific education and the economic flows directly or deferred promoted, including the capacity to generate jobs and business skills (Beel, 2017). Due to

this, the commitment of all the parties involved in the development of the museum and its activation and patrimonial dissemination actions is required. The set of stakeholders, from the managers, to the local community, the companies and the visitor, as the main actor to which the efforts of maintenance and updating of the museum offer are destined, forms the nucleus of the possible strategies aimed at good practices (Soren, 2005) in the governance of the institution.

This work is part of a larger analysis, which seeks to verify not so much the success of museums, but the common benefits that can be obtained by their success for the populations involved. Enhance patrimonial sensibility (both cultural and environmental), generate funds for non-profit causes and establish community awareness, in some cases identity, more than justify the institution's effort to create broad networks of social impact. For this reason, it is important to establish methodological instruments to infer degrees of governance and governability, determine the range and depth of their networks, and the quality of relationships among stakeholders. Such information, generated in a systematic way, can contribute to establish a bidirectional and symbiotic relationship between the museum and local actors, also detecting possible conflicts of interest or gaps in the structure of the network.

The governance of museums goes through the value of what is shown, the rigor of what is communicated, the approach to the user, the involvement in local environments and an acceptable degree of political and financial independence. In tourist destinations, or when the museum itself is an attractor or motivating complement to the visit, the case literature seems to advise the development of strategies that, through knowledge, estimate the profile of its potential users-tourists and their needs, above the mere interest of communication of speeches. It is about complying with the directive to transmit to conserve, and not to trivialize the heritage.

It is recognized as a limitation of the research presented and of these conclusions the impossibility of having carried out a diachronic analysis that included the follow-up of concrete actions in the network of relationships. Even with this, it is considered that the exposed perspective can contribute to the generation and promotion of new forms of public-private-community relationship, establishing measurable roles and responsibilities that support the road to sustainability. It does not seem rational that the museum is a value only for itself and its proponents, nor that the museum is a kind of theme park. The analysis of the operation of governance applied to heritage shows different possible scenarios.

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## Notas

- <sup>1</sup> Thick flour of toasted corn, wheat or barley and occasionally mixed with sugar

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