



FIRST REPORT ON ACCESSIBILITY IN PERU FOR TOURISTS WITH DISABILITIES



Peru, January 2001

Presentation Presentation

The project “Peru: Towards an Accessible Tourism”, organized by PromPerú in co-ordination with Kéroul (Canada), SATH (U.S.A.), Conadis and Confiep, was aimed at making public and private companies more sensitive about the issues of accessibility and disability, training specialists from the tourism sector and analyzing –with measuring tapes and special evaluation sheets– the accessibility level of more than one hundred tourist facilities, such as hotels, restaurants, malls, tourist attractions, airports, churches and museums. Target cities included Aguas Calientes, Cusco, Iquitos, Lima and Trujillo. These were days of hard work, in which more than one asked if the project weren’t too ambitious in trying to evaluate so many places in such a short time. However, our will made it all possible. In fact, it was a decision that was fed everyday by the enthusiasm of all the people we met and whose energy was perhaps the only thing too big to be measured by our tapes.

Decision and enthusiasm were our loyal friends along the road, especially in Aguas Calientes, where the group, which included two consultants in wheelchairs –José and Guy- and a third with a white cane – Francisco -, climbed to the Inca citadel of Machu Picchu. Despite the sun and the numerous stone stairs, it was easy to feel the emotion in our hearts when we reached the Temple of the Three Windows, one of the highest areas of the archaeological complex. That afternoon, each person deep inside had won a personal challenge.

Many were the lessons we learned in a month, but maybe the most important was that all physical limitations can be surpassed with decision. A wise young prince once said, “The essential things are not material, they are really invisible to the eyes”.

In this sense, Peru is on its way towards accessibility and even though there are still lots of pending challenges related to infrastructure, Peruvians have the firm decision to open our country to everyone. And this is really essential and important. As examples, we have one thousand people who attended the training workshops with the intention of offering the best service to people with disabilities, tour operators who made huge efforts in trying to find the most comfortable way for their customers to travel by wheelchair through the Amazon rainforest or the Andes and others who, despite the scarcity of their resources, built accessible toilets and ramps before we arrived.

For the training portion of the project, we created an 85-page Service Manual for Tourists with Disabilities, *with information developed exclusively for these workshops, as well as materials from previous research conducted by local and foreign organizations. Each participant received the manual on computer diskette as well as a diploma.*

There are many opportunities that arise for Peru by promoting the development of tourism for people with disabilities, a market estimated at 61 million people in Canada, the US and Western Europe (Kéroul,

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1994). In the US alone, the main source of tourists that come to Peru, the disabled population is at least 54 million people (US Census Bureau, 1994).

PromPeru has taken since 1998 a series of actions in favor of the development of tourism for people with disabilities, with the knowledge that upgrading the infrastructure and tourist services will benefit not only tourists with disabilities, but also the general population, especially senior citizens, people with temporary disabilities (due to accidents or illness), pregnant women, people with babies and overweight people. The work that PromPeru has done during these years was possible thanks to a joint effort between private and public institutions. This effort was recognized by SATH in January 1999 when it awarded PromPeru the Access to Freedom Award during its Third World Congress that took place in Ft. Lauderdale, FL. (USA). That same year PromPeru presented in Lima and Cusco the investigative report Tourism for people with disabilities: a market segment in expansion, the first of a series of documents, like this one, that will enable us to make more people aware, on a daily basis, of the importance of Tourism for All.

The present evaluation report constitutes the first effort made in Peru to analyze accessibility levels of the local tourist infrastructure and includes the future challenge of integrating more cities and tourist services. In the future, the plan is to publish a tourism guide for people with disabilities.

We thank all the people who motivate us every day to continue with the project of tourism development for people with disabilities. We also thank Laurel Van Horn from SATH, Guy Déry from Kéroul, José Isola from Confiep and Francisco Vásquez from Conadis for helping us throughout one whole month, leaving their jobs, homes and families in order to achieve this shared dream. Our thanks go also to Fernando Sotomayor from Lima Tours, for his unlimited patience and to Ghislaine Busby, for the calmness transmitted to the group. We also thank all those businessmen and officials of the private and public sectors who made this project possible. Thank you.

Alessia Di Paolo
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PromPeru

Conclusions and recommendations

The project “Peru: Towards Accessible Tourism” developed by PromPeru in coordination with K eroul (Canada), SATH (USA), CONADIS (Peru) and CONFIEP (Peru), in September of 2000 included evaluation of the existing tourism infrastructure of the cities of Aguas Calientes, Cusco, Iquitos, Lima and Trujillo. More than 100 hotels, restaurants, tourist attractions, museums and airports were evaluated. These are the main conclusions of what is the first effort done to analyze the degree of accessibility of tourist products and services for people with disabilities in Peru. The evaluations were made using the standards of the Canadian organization Keroul and those used by SATH that are based on the American with Disabilities Act. (See Accessibility Categories section). Some of the suggestions and recommendations made are included in the Manual for the Attention of Tourists with Disabilities and on the report: Tourism for People with Disabilities: a Developing Segment. Both of these documents have been published by PromPeru and are available to everybody that is interested in them.

Lodging facilities

- Of the 43 lodging facilities that were evaluated (hotels, hostels and lodges) information of 29 of these facilities has been included in this report. This is because their infrastructure, at the moment the evaluation was done, came nearer to the parameters used internationally to classify levels of accessibility.
- Even though none of the facilities evaluated can be considered as accessible for people with all kinds of disabilities, there are hotels included in this report that offer wheelchair accessible rooms and/or have public spaces that are accessible with help (like restaurants, recreation areas and/or public restrooms).
- Most of the wheelchair accessible hotels are located in Lima, followed by the city of Cusco. In Trujillo, Aguas Calientes and Iquitos there are no totally accessible lodging facilities. However, there is a lodge, located in the Amazon rainforest, that has a wheelchair accessible room and bathroom.

- Most of the hotels that were evaluated showed their commitment to modify part of their infrastructure to give adequate service to guests with disabilities. They have to take into consideration that the international rules state that all lodging facilities have to have a number of accessible rooms depending on the total amount of rooms they have in the facility. Part of these hotel personnel attended the training seminars that were given during the project. We recommend that the hotels, hostels and lodges include in their service policies the training of their staff to better serve tourists with disabilities and that they consider buying the basic technological aids to serve deaf and hard of hearing people, as well as special training on emergency evacuation procedures.

Restaurants

- Of the 34 restaurants that were evaluated, information of 31 of these facilities has been included in this report. This is because their infrastructure, at the moment the evaluation was done, came nearer to the parameters used internationally to classify levels of accessibility.
- Even though none of the restaurants evaluated can be considered as accessible for people with all kinds of disabilities, there are restaurants included in this report that offer certain special services, like wheelchair accessible public restrooms and/or entrances that are accessible or accessible with help. Even though none of the restaurants evaluated had menus in Braille, part of their personnel was trained and instructed on how to give a better service to blind or vision impaired people, as well as on how to serve people with mobility impairments.
- Only a small number of the evaluated restaurants, located in the cities of Lima and Trujillo (Huanchaco), had wheelchair accessible public restrooms.
- We recommend that all the restaurants modify their public restrooms to make them accessible, especially for people that use wheelchairs or that have other physical problems.

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Also we recommend that they make a special effort to better the quality of service offered to deaf or hard of hearing people.

Tourist attractions

- Of the 26 tourist attractions that were evaluated (museums, churches and archeological sites) information about 24 of these facilities has been included in this report. This is because their infrastructure, at the moment the evaluation was done, came nearer to the parameters used internationally to classify levels of accessibility or can be accessible with the help of specially trained staff. This is the case of the citadel of Machu Picchu (Cusco) and the clay city of Chan Chan (Trujillo) both of them appointed as Natural and Cultural Mankind Heritage by UNESCO and therefore forbidden to be altered.
- People using wheelchairs can visit these sites in the company of tour operators that have specially trained personnel to take care of their needs.
- There are museums, like the Larco Herrera museum in the city of Lima that offer special services for blind and vision impaired people. For example: these persons will be allowed to touch with their hands some replicas of the pieces that are exhibited. Also, the museum located inside the Chan Chan ruins in Trujillo offers special services for deaf and hard of hearing people.
- We recommend that the areas that are outside the zones identified as historical heritage (like public restrooms, ticket counters and souvenir shops), be remodeled in order to satisfy the needs of tourists with disabilities, specially those using wheelchairs. Also we recommend that the people working as guides at these sites be trained for the better service of deaf and hard of hearing people and visitors who are blind.

Other services

- Of the four airports that were evaluated in the cities of Lima, Cusco, Iquitos and Trujillo, the one that was most accessible was the Velasco Astete Airport in the city of Cusco. This air-

port has jetways to board and disembark people from airplanes, as well as wheelchair accessible public restrooms. With the exception of the airport of the city of Iquitos, all the airports evaluated had wheelchair accessible public restrooms.

- Part of the personnel from Peru's Airport and Civil Aviation Corporation (CORPAC) was trained to give better service to travelers with disabilities at the training sessions that were given through out the duration of the project.
- The main Peruvian airports are in the process of being given in concession to private operators. The Jorge Chavez Airport of the city of Lima has already been given in concession to a company that has committed itself to remodel the terminal infrastructure in a given time. We recommend that this remodeling process include accessibility criteria for all kinds of disabilities.
- Most of the airlines that fly to and from Peru as well as those that serve the local destinations have boarding chairs available. Part of their personnel was trained during the duration of the project on how to use these chairs, and in the cases that the airports did not have jetways, they were trained on how the conduct the boarding and disembarking process using the boarding chairs. Nonetheless, we recommend constant training sessions, so that all personnel (cabin crews, counter attendants and ground personnel, as well as the personnel of the companies sub contracted by the airlines and the airport operators), get refresher training at least once a year.
- We recommend that those airlines that do not own boarding chairs, avoid boarding and disembarking passengers in their own chairs or in chairs that airports have available for passenger use. These chairs have no security features that guarantee the safety of the person sitting on them and cannot access the aisles. Hand carrying people in and out of airplanes must not be permitted under any circumstance.
- Peru has in the cities of Cusco, Lima, Iquitos and Trujillo tour operators specialized in serving this segment of the market and that are

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very interested in keeping themselves updated and broadening their services. These companies are in constant coordination with other tourist service providers (like those who provide ground transportation) to assure that a comfortable and secure service is provided.

We recommend that both government and private sectors work seriously in the development of a system that makes transportation easier for people using wheelchairs, through retrofitting air and ground transportation terminals as well as investing in adapted means of transportation (trains, motor coaches, vans and taxi cabs).

If you want to know more information about the level of accessibility of tourist products and services for people with disabilities in Peru, you can contact Alessia Di Paolo, at adipaolo@promperu.gob.pe

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Conadis

Created in 1999, the National Council of Integration for Disabled People (Consejo Nacional de Integración de la Persona con Discapacidad - Conadis) is the Decentralized Public Institution of the Women and Human Development Ministry (Ministerio de la Mujer y del Desarrollo Humano - Promudeh). Among Conadis's functions are formulating and approving all kinds of policies, such as prevention, protection, health care, work, education, rehabilitation, social security and accessibility, so that people with disabilities develop and integrate socially, culturally and economically.

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Confiep

The National Confederation of Private Business Institutions (Confederación Nacional de Instituciones Empresariales Privadas - CONFIEP) was officially established in 1984. Its objective was to contribute to the sustainable economic growth process, based on investment and work promotion from the efforts of individual initiative, business expansion and private property. Its growing responsibility is to examine the global context and promote the country's integration within international markets. Confiep brings together and represents Peru's private business activity, at local and worldwide levels. A representative from Confiep is part of Conadis's Executive Council since its creation in 1999.

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Kéroul

Founded in the city of Montreal (Canada) in 1979 by André Leclerc, who is also the current executive director, Kéroul is an organization that seeks to facilitate, together with the tourist industry, tourism accessibility for people with disabilities. To solve the needs of those tourist companies willing to serve the significant portion of the market formed by people with disabilities, Kéroul offers a broad variety of services including all-inclusive tours and trips, training, consulting and publications. Kéroul has been recognized by the Office for People with Disabilities of the Province of Quebec and is Tourisme Quebec's privileged spokesman for people with disabilities. The city of Montreal has recently named Kéroul as its spe-

cial advisor regarding tourism for people with disabilities.

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PromPerú

Created in 1993, the Commission for the Promotion of Peru - PromPerú (Comisión de Promoción del Perú) is in charge of promoting an integrated and attractive image of the country, thus encouraging investments and tourism. In its promotion task, PromPerú develops strategies for integral promotion and information. Since April 1998, it is working on developing tourism for people with disabilities, in co-ordination with public and private institutions. Part of the information collected since that time is compiled in a research study titled "Tourism for people with disability: a developing segment" (October 1999).

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SATH

Created in 1976, the Society for the Advancement of Travel for the Handicapped - SATH is an educational non-profit which works actively in the United States and worldwide to promote and improve tourism for people with disabilities and mature travelers. SATH represents the interests of these persons within the main American tourism organizations such as American Society of Travel Agents and National Tour Association. In addition to serving as a clearinghouse for access information, SATH publishes a disability travel magazine, Open World, and organizes conferences on accessible travel in the US and overseas. An active advocate of disability rights, SATH was involved in the creation of the accessibility section of the Americans with Disabilities Act and recently served on an Access Board committee writing new access guidelines for passenger vessels. As of January 2001, SATH will have a new name: Society for Accessible Travel & Hospitality.

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