

ACCESSIBLE TOURISM FOR THE SEASIDE. CASE GENERAL VILLAMIL, ECUADOR

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Abstract

In Ecuador, Atacames has been the first beach to encourage accessible tourism through the infrastructure implementation. General Villamil Playas is a relevant seaside, located 97 kilometers from Guayaquil city, has a warm and pleasant weather and a large expanse of beach, but at the same time lacks tourist infrastructure for people with limited mobility; therefore, it was the purpose of this study to analyze the accessibility for tourism of this group of people in this area. This research is reinforced by theories and studies raised by several authors, with a mixed approach, using quantitative and qualitative data. Empirical and theoretical methods were applied, operating techniques and tools that helped gather information through interviews, observation files, and surveys. For, the sample, the tourists were considered in a range of 15 to 65 years old, applying the formula for finite population, where 379 people were surveyed, who support the need to introduce facilities for people with limited mobility, giving openness to the design of an accessibility system on the beach boardwalk and also toward the beach. The improvement of accessibility can allow relatives enjoy together because an inclusive infrastructure supports the whole family to visit tourist sites, and also it contributes to developing new tourism products in the community for national and international tourists. To conclude, this research seeks the relationship between the level of accessibility of beaches, the training of service providers and the increase in customer visits, which could be useful for practical applications in other areas.

Keywords: Accessible tourism, beach, seaside, limited mobility

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1. INTRODUCTION

In our society, not all people are able to face daily life with the same naturalness. Leisure is one basic right of the human being, like the health, the work, and the education, which no one should be excluded. However, some difficulties remain present for limited mobility people, at the time of enjoying the leisure, rest or execute other tourist activities. The presence of architectural barriers does not allow all people to enjoy and practice the right to recreate during their free time through leisure, this circumstance also prevents their integration into the community, because carrying out those different actions, reflect a large number of constraints that confront this group.

New products, new industries arise worldwide. Tourism is a social phenomenon of great growth, being in many countries the main economic income. In consequence, accessible tourism takes on an outstanding role within this industry, becoming a market segment with a small approach to different and specialized tourist products.

Disability is not only a term for handicap people. The majority of the population at some point in their lives will suffer some kind of disability or inability that is transient or permanently induced, those who arrive at an older age will suffer age-specific problems which result in difficulties to mobilize. As people with limited mobility are contemplated: older adults, pregnant women, young children, individuals with a temporary or permanent disability, etc.), as well as the rest of society.

According to the World Health Organization in its World Report on disability, Summary 2011, considers that there are more than one billion people who suffer from a certain type of disability, which constitutes that, 15% of the population at a global level set drawbacks that prevent your normal developing. (OMS, 2011)

During the year 2009, there were more than 730 million of people who exceeded 60 years, a figure that indicates 10% of the world population. This indicates a progression that overpasses 20% considering the year 2000 as a reference point. According to the figure it estimates, the number of people who exceed 60 years of age will have increased by 2050 and can mean 20% of the population around the world.

The increase in people with disabilities within the industrialized countries, who have the economic means and the availability of time, increase the demand for accessible places that provide services and are suitable for this purpose.

The shortage of accesses limits activities and participation of some potential tourist. Limited mobility people desist from traveling to a certain site to make some type of activity related to tourism in favorable conditions in the daily work. Many cities around the world are encouraging and supporting activities that allow these people to enjoy and improve their touristic experiences, considering changes and improvements in infrastructure, provision of tourist services, training and sensitizing.

The adequate endowment of infrastructure and transport that adapts to the needs of people with some kind of difficult to move, is a preponderant factor for the consolidation of accessible tourism, unfortunately many of the environments, services, and transports are not designed to provide an adequate attention to these people, which could diminish this growing market.

The purpose of the study is that older adults and people with mobility difficulties get profit, have places of recreation and would be able to enjoy environments to which they could not previously access easily, elevating their attitude and encouragement to see life in a better way. There are many impediments to accessibility that affect visitors during a trip or part of a route, added to this the lack of information on accommodation, transportation, and recreational activities, hinder the enjoyment of a great tourist experience in equal conditions that the rest of the people. Consequently, the research question arises as: What tourist facilities does the Canton General Villamil Playas offer to people with limited mobility?

In Ecuador, there is only one accessible tourist destination to the present. General Villamil includes beauty and tranquility of its beaches, a warm weather, and friendliness of its people, which make it a potential accessible tourist destination with projection to a national and international level that will increase the number of tourists. For this reason, the present study focuses on analyzing the facilities provided by the Canton General Villamil Playas in the development of accessible tourism as a measure to attract this group of people and their companions, encouraging the increase of tourism to this market segment.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The disability is derived from the relationship between people and deficiencies, architectural and attitudinal barriers, that avoid their full intervention in equal opportunities than the rest of society. (ONU, 2006)

Among people with limited mobility are elderly people with or without physical deficiencies, overweight people, people who carry baby carts, women in pregnancy, and people with a cardiac deficiency, among others. (SERVIU, 2013) There are also people who have a temporary disability such as someone who suffered an accident and product of it must use crutches, nails or plaster for some time in one of its extremities, people who suffer permanent disability such as blindness, auditory problems, and intellectual deficiency among others. (OMT, 2014)

The National Directorate of Disabilities (DND) said that disability is a very broad term that encompasses the difficulties that afflict a body system or activity, making it difficult to perform tasks that prevent active participation in their daily activities. (DND, 2015)

Accessibility is a term that has been incorporated from years ago. The "International Congress for the Suppression of Architectural Barriers" held in Switzerland in 1963 touches the

theme of accessibility and defines it as the right of every human being (Condo & Portes, 2006). The UNWTO issued the Manila Declaration in September 1980, which joined the terms of tourism and accessibility for the first time. Tourism is recognized as a very necessary right to develop the human being, in this sense, the UNWTO encouraged its members to consider tourist accessibility within their laws and regulations. (Nuñez, 2012)

The nations belonging to UNWTO in October 1999 gathered in Santiago de Chile adopting the Global Code of Ethics, which among other things proclaims, the promotion of the specific rights of vulnerable groups, such as persons with disabilities, the right to run tourism, promotion and ease of this activity to senior citizens and those with disabilities among others (OMT, 1999). During 2005 the UNWTO renews the contents towards an accessible tourism for all, which includes specific recommendations on information and tourism advertising, training of collaborators and requirements that must have sites and facilities of tourist interest. These recommendations were updated in 2013 by participating in these task groups of institutions of people with disabilities with the UNWTO (OMT, 2014).

The specialized manual of accessible tourism defines accessibility as the group of particularities that an environment, product or service must be available to all people, especially those who suffer some type of disability in environments that offer equality, comfort, and safety. (Meta, 2015)

Universal accessibility is an indispensable requirement within environments, procedures, provision of services, which includes instruments and mechanisms, to be handled in a simple way, useful for all people in environments that provide guarantee and welfare in the most independent conditions possible. (Jaen Accesible, 2015)

UNWTO describes accessible tourism as a type of tourism involving a series of cooperation and assistance that encompasses the party concerned with providing individuals with particular requirements for access, performing freely with equity, thanks to the existence of products, services and tourist environments planned in a universal way (OMT, 2014). Consequently, to guarantee to incorporate those people into the experience that tourism provides must be run appropriate tourist plant facilities.

According to Boullón, (2006) tourist plant facilities are composed of equipment and facilities. That is to say that the tourist plant is linked to the goods and services that satisfy the tourists at the moment they visit a certain place.

Table 1 Classifications of the elements of the tourist equipment.

Category	Type	Category	Type	Category	Type	
Accommodation	1.1 Hotels	Feeding	2.1 Restaurants	Spreading	3.1 Nightclubs	
	1.2 Motels				3.2 Discos	
	1.3 Hostels and inns				3.3 Bars	
	1.4 Pensions				3.4 Casinos and other games	
	1.5 Aparthotels				2.2 Coffee shops	3.5 Cinemas and theaters
	1.6 Condominiums (units or sets)				2.3 Kiosks	3.6 Other public spectacles (bulls, rooster fights, rodeos etc.).
	1.7 Houses (units or neighborhoods)		3.7 Sport clubs			
	1.8 Cabins		2.4 Typical eateries			3.8 Theme parks
	1.9 Hostels					
	1.10 Trailer Park					
	1.11 Camping					
	1.12 Beds in family homes					

Source: Taken from (Boullon, 2006).

2.1 Specific characteristics that should have places of recreation

People with reduced mobility need accessible places which are designed to enter without any restrictions. In the next paragraphs, it will be described several requirements related to the facilities and equipment for attaining accessible tourism status, conforming to SERNATUR of Chile.

For the equipment, the customer service desk such a hotel, cinema, theatre and other establishments, must show divergences of height for comfort and pay a better attention to the different types of clients. (SERNATUR, 2011)

Food service establishments, such as a restaurant with accessible features, provide facilities for wheelchair users, the tables must be conveniently located between the main entrance and the bathrooms, in this route, it must not be more than 2 cm. This establishment on the outside will exhibit the international distinctiveness of accessibility, the tables must have four bases or a central base, the free width between those measurements it must be 90 cm, so that the wheelchair enters without any difficulties; the height under the table must be 76 cm, the main transit space must have 120 cm and the complementary 90 cm, (SERNATUR, 2011).

In places such as cinemas, auditoriums, and theatres, they must necessarily have areas for people with disabilities which they must be distinguished by showing the international symbol of disability. The free area will have approximately 125 x 85 cm in dimensions, located close to the exit, this route must not have obstacles, such as advertising posters, level terrain, etc. Within the facilities, the person using a wheelchair with independent gliding needs an area of 120 cm long x 80 cm at 90 cm wide, if the person is supported by a companion, this length will extend to 200 cm, should be taken into account in the same way as the diameter required for a wheelchair is 150 cm (SERNATUR, 2011).

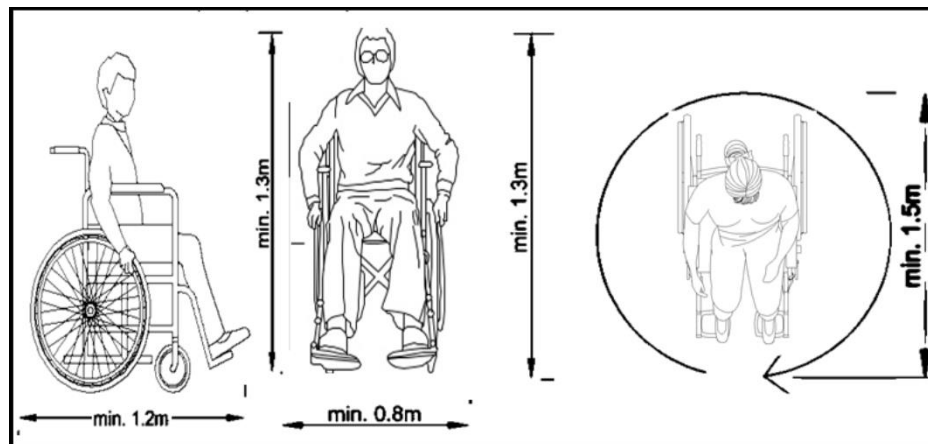


Figure 1 Measure for people who use wheelchairs
Source: SERVIU (2013)

For a visually impaired person who moves with the help of a cane, you need a minimum area of 90 cm wide by 120 cm long. A person who moves with the help of crutches needs a minimum area of 90 cm in width to be able to mobilize comfortably and in a safe manner, the person who uses canine assistance needs a minimum area of 80 cm wide. (SERVIU, 2013).

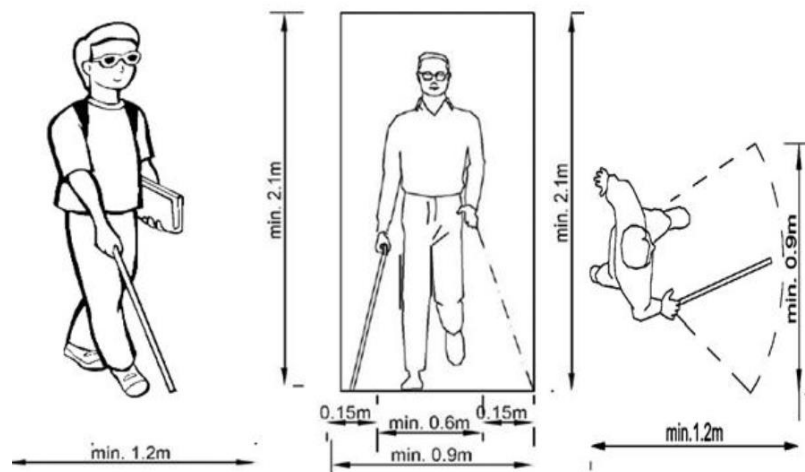


Figure 2 Measures for people with walking sticks
Source: SERVIU (2013)

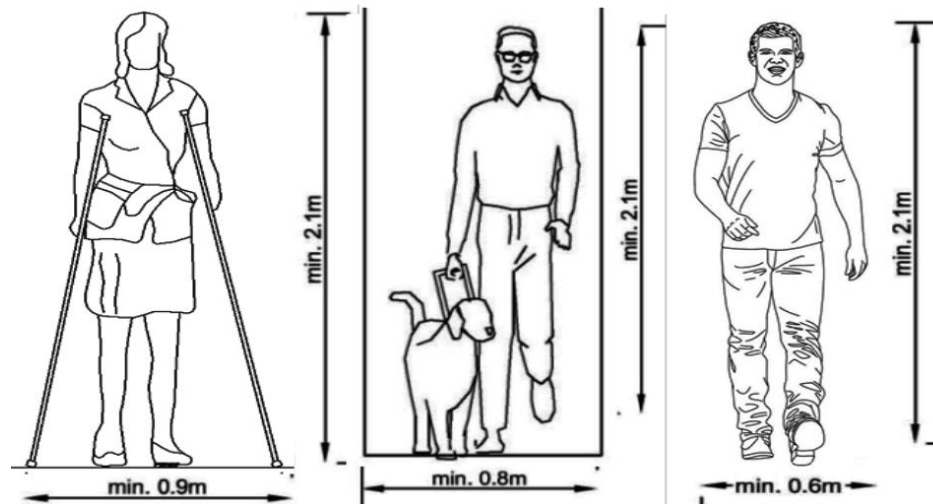


Figure 3 Difference among measures of limited mobility people and not.

Source: SERVIU (2013)

For Boullón, (2006) and Ricaurte (2009) the infrastructure "to the endowment of goods and services with which a country has to sustain its social and productive structures" (p. 47). In other words, the infrastructure as understood by Boullón is like the provision of goods and services that a state has to maintain and develop social and productive sectors, in this particular case tourism. They are included: basic services, transport, health services, communications, and others.

Within the conception of accessible tourism, this does not discriminate or belong particularly to any person; rather it increases the number of tourists likely to reach different products, tourist services, adding a differentiation of them, which will positively promote tourism for all.

The UNWTO intercedes for the viability of travel for people who suffer some type of disability or with particular requirements, which are a fundamental part of any consenting and sustainable tourism regime. These groups of clients generally move in the company of friends or family. Disabled people need an accessible environment in which the adaptations do not stand out at a glance so that this group of the population does not experience some kind of positive exclusion. (Diotallevi, 2015)

It was also noted that accessibility is a combination of elements that help the displacement and use of people with motor deficiencies, with furniture adapted to the needs of this type of people (Melgar, Granados, & Cortez, 2012).

Universal accessibility in public spaces is an urgent necessity that contributes to the use of all people suffering or not a disability, within this area we have: accessible routes are continuous paths that do not present obstructions which are made of non-slip firm concrete. It should be 90 cm wide by 210 cm high, this empowers those who mobilize in a wheelchair to move between

the street and buildings with total independence, contributing to normal development in their daily lives (Accessible Cities Corporation, 2014). The styles and exigencies of the present life are changing, one must think in an imperious way about the harmony that must exist between the people and their environment, designing within sustainable models. Considering this, it becomes very necessary to integrate universal accessibility considering the adaptation or creation of cities with environments where a man and his environment can coexist in a balanced way. (Accessible Cities Corporation, 2010)

Regarding the transversal slope located in the vehicular exit that crosses perpendicularly a path in which the slope does not have to reverberate in the pedestrian traffic area in at least 90 cm wide, the path does not have to exceed 2%. For the minimum width of the circulation, the band should be considered 150 cm wide, which facilitates circulation for those who move in wheelchairs and those who walk at the same time, leaving the necessary area that allows 360 turns. For the displacement of two wheelchairs or baby carriages at the same time, a width of 200 cm is needed, making it possible to make turns. (Accessible Cities Corporation, 2010).

In pedestrian crossings, the difference between the curb and the level of the street must reach zero, if there is unevenness, the traffic of someone using a wheelchair will be impossible, with respect to narrow paths, they have to descend the length and width until reaching the level of the street, it is necessary to incorporate a texture strip, alerting blind people that a crossing is next (Accessible Cities Corporation, 2010).

In the pedestrian crossing that has a continuous path, preference is given to pedestrian traffic over the circulation of vehicles or if it is necessary to reduce the speed of automotive traffic, the road must be raised until it coincides with the level of the sidewalk taking into account the total width of the pedestrian crossing. (Accessible Cities Corporation, 2014)

The guides or tactile bands are used on the floor to warn those who are visually impaired about the circulation, this information is obtained by means of the cane and its lower base while moving. The appropriate use of this resource helps those who suffer from visual difficulties, if it is used inappropriately it can confuse and put at risk the people who transit through the place. (Accessible Cities Corporation, 2014)

The straight movement indicates straight displacements that can make slight turns, the angle turn allows it to be greater than 45°, must necessarily be indicated by a frame that shows danger. In the alerts or change of address, it must first say stop to inspect the place and continue the movement with great caution. (Accessible Cities Corporation, 2014).

The location of the exclusive parking for people with disabilities must be located in such a way that it does not limit access to buildings or pedestrian traffic. The route that goes from the parking lot to the entrance is linked in an accessible way. There are several types of parking for people with disabilities; parallel to the road; perpendicular to the road and diagonal to the path. (Accessible Cities Corporation, 2010)

In order to consider that a beach has accessibility, it must provide travel facilities for people who move in wheelchairs, elderly people with or without physical disabilities who find it difficult to travel in the sand, among others. For this purpose, a walkway that begins in the parking lot and extends to the closest to the sea must also have exclusive parking for the disabled. (SERNATUR, 2011)

In order for disabled people to live and develop autonomously and to be able to fully intervene in their daily activities, countries accept measures to improve and guarantee access to them in conditions that the rest of the people. In the accessibility guide to the physical environment, the Ecuadorian Institute of Normalization INEN presented technical norms regarding accessibility in the norm NTE INEN 2 243: 2009, within this standard, utilitarian construction measures and typologies are implemented to allow pedestrian traffic on public and private roads on Ecuador. (INEN, 2009)

Ecuador shows a great predisposition to the development of accessible tourism, to meet the needs and expectations of tourists is necessary to regulate the use of tourist signals, providing clear and detailed information, this will help the efficient growth of our destinations. The pictograms related to the tourist activity, symbolize the activities that are originated by the interaction between the supply and demand of goods and services established by those who offer them, which satisfy the tourists. The tourist signaling manual of Ecuador indicates that among the different types of pictograms are those of support service; they show visitors the location of different services. (MINTUR, INEC, 2011)

3. METHODOLOGY

The scope of this research was to analyze the accessibility for tourists with limited mobility in General Villamil Playas, applying a mixed approach as a research design, where was collected qualitative and quantitative data (Hernández-Sampieri, Fernández & Baptista, 2010). The immersed variables included: tourism infrastructure and limited mobility. Consequently, as a type of research was used bibliographic and fieldwork.

The population involved in the study are the tourist with limited mobility or relatives. Regarding sample data, a population of 25 813 tourists was provided by the Tourism Bureau of Playas, based in studies and statistics done during the Holy Christ Holidays, founded in the amount of particular and public vehicles, of Public Enterprise of Tourism in Guayaquil. The formula for the finite population was applied, with a reliability of 95% and error of 5%, therefore 379 surveys were held to tourists with limited mobility or tourist who had handicap relatives, the collection place was Playas, on weekends, in the period from June to September 2016; were excluded inhabitants of the canton.

Analysis of the validity and reliability of the scales was done by SPSS program. The final measurement model for reliability in the Cronbach's Alpha was of 0,931 in 10 items. Factor analysis by KMO and Bartlett's Test was used to test the validity of the scales used, obtaining 0,819 with a significance of 0,000.

Diverse theoretical methods were introduced in the study. They included historic-logic, analytic-synthetic, induction-deduction. The former was applied to review the background of tourism for people with limited mobility. Analytic-synthetic methods tried to evaluate the tourism facilities in the place of study and cases of others destinations. Finally, induction - deduction was functional from the surveys about the requirement of specific infrastructure and interviews to specialists.

The use of techniques and research tools were used for collecting data. Techniques applied were observation, surveys, and interviews. Through observation was collected qualitative data about the core problem of this study, to analyze the weaknesses which have limited the development of tourist activities for this type of people. To elaborate files of observations, the following aspects were considered: Accessibility to the canton, public transportation to the destination, security, tourist sign and tourist services. The scale was excellent, good, medium, fair, poor, very poor according to Hernández-Sampieri et al. (2010)

Queries of surveys were concerned to know about accessible tourism, relatives in the family with limited mobility, tourist facilities of the canton in the area of limited mobility, the necessity of improvement in infrastructure, available information about places with accessibility tourism, contribution in tourism, knowledge of tourist servers.

Interviews were also done to the Tourism Director of Playas, Katherine Garay, about the knowledge of accessible tourism, the current situation of the canton in this topic, actual state of tourist servers, positive impacts of inclusion of limited mobility tourists in the tourism of Playas.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Descriptive analysis

The tourists were considered in a range of 15 to 65 years old, applying the formula for the finite population, where 379 people were surveyed. After the application of fieldwork, the following information was provided:

Table 2 – Score of components

Components	Likert-scale
Accessibility	Good
Transportation	Good
Security	Good
Sign	Poor
Restaurants	Good
Bathrooms	Fair
Hotels	Fair

Concerning infrastructure, the accessibility to Playas is in optimal conditions, two lanes facilitate the vehicular flow. Public transportation is provided by Villamil buses; in reference to the capacity, frequency time and comfort, the service was categorized as good by the observation of authors. About security, National Police provide to the destination the citizen’s custodian, Ecuadorian Navy take care of the beach, in consequence, this aspect was rated as good. Nevertheless, Playas has not implemented accessible facilities in the urban destination.

On the boardwalk lacks signs for identifying parking space, so this aspect is considered fair. Restaurants as tourist servers are the main components of the destination, locals are above the level of the beach, stairs give accessibility to them and ramps with a steep slope. Bathrooms do not provide facilities to limited mobility tourists. There are some long wooden walkways from the boardwalk to the sea, but the lack of maintenance has induced damage to them. For hospitality were taken as sample some hotels located on the boardwalk, they do not have either facility for limited mobility people. In consequence tourist service was rated as fair.

In reference to the first question, most of the people do not know about accessible tourism (37%), some others refer a possible knowledge of it (21%) and 16% that really know about it. The second question requests if the testers had relatives with limited mobility, most of the answer were positive (31%) and 45% were limited mobility people.

To the question about an opinion of the facilities of Playas for limited mobility people, most of the tourist said that it has not (57%), 25% referred probably no.

Question about the opinion of generating improvements of infrastructure for limited mobility people in Playas, 87% said they were strongly agreed. People answer 47% probably no and 38% strongly no to the question about if there is available information of places with facilities for limited mobility people in Playas.

66% of people strongly agree that improvement increases the tourism for this group of people. Although that 66% also recognize the lack of tourist service for those people. 70% says tourist servers lack knowledge about how to respond to the demand of those tourists

4.2 Inferential statistics

In order to find a possible relationship between some variables, a correlation was used and confirmed by regression analysis:

One model was applied to two different variables, considering the increase of tourist as the dependent variable. The model demonstrates the correlation between the improvement of accessibility and the training of tourist servers, with a confidence level of 95%, and significance of 0,000 among all independent variables.

The increase of tourism as dependent variable obtained a 77% of influence by the improvement of accessibility (infrastructure) and the training of tourist servers, assuming the relationship of the variable, which could be useful for practical application in other studies.

Table 3. Correlation of variables

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	-,467	,077		-6,083	,000
	Infrastructure	,541	,022	,652	24,767	,000
	Training	,311	,020	,401	15,231	,000

a. Dependent Variable: Increase of tourism

5. PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Through this study, an accessibility system was designed for the General Villamil, with the following content:

- The removal of architectural and urbanistic barriers,
- Adaptation of the parking
- Access ramps and signage.
- Bathrooms and showers adapted for people with limited mobility.
- Wooden access to the beach.
- Amphibious chairs
- Inclusive games and inclusive sports

6. CONCLUSION

According to the tourist attractions and its spring weather, the General Villamil Playas canton can improve the economic income if the necessary conditions are created, so that people with limited mobility can have a pleasant stay with environments that meet their needs. The observation made it possible to establish that there are the necessary characteristics to become an

accessible tourist destination, and data collection indicated that people are agreed to adaptations and improvement that allows access to the beach and boardwalk.

To conclude, General Villamil Playas lacks infrastructure for the development of tourism for people with limited mobility, which restricts this group of people to visit this canton, although destination could improve its facilities considering that group, providing enjoyment of moments of relaxation, within an environment appropriate to their needs and requirements, therefore contributing to the integration of families.

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