

Tourist Accessibility in the Sanctuary of San Andrés De Teixido (Galicia - Spain)

Sergio Muíño Freire¹, ²Xosé Manuel Santos Solla

^{1,2}Universidade de Santiago de Compostela

ABSTRACT: Tourism is a sector that moves millions of tourists every year, 970 million in 2023 (OMT, 2024) around the world. The need to develop accessible, barrier-free and inclusive tourism, adapted to the abilities that each person may have, is growing. Those destinations that concentrate their efforts on planning their infrastructures and services within this framework will become a reference of good practices, improving their image, the quality of life of their population, the tourist experience and will attract visitors interested in quality, universal and inclusive tourism. «Tourism for all». In this case, the sanctuary of San Andrés de Teixido is a reference point for pilgrimages in Galicia (Spain), attended by thousands of people every year with different circumstances and physical abilities.

Keywords: inclusion; accessibility; sustainability; Functional diversity; sustainable development

I. Introduction

Destinations are increasingly aware of the need to offer accessible and inclusive spaces for all people, regardless of their abilities. In order to learn more about the differences between accessible tourism and inclusive tourism, it is worth noting that the former takes into account the design, planning, access conditions or development in its conception, while the latter is planned, managed and offered taking into account the various segments that demand different needs, given by the different abilities they present, which is why it is necessary to adapt services and products to meet expectations and offer quality (Pelegrín Entenza, Toledo Leal, & Naranjo Lluport, 2017). Therefore, accessibility is a necessary and essential condition, although not sufficient, to achieve inclusive tourism, as other aspects such as the surroundings or the environment are relevant.

The sanctuary of San Andrés de Teixido is one of the pilgrimage sites par excellence in Galicia, second only to Santiago de Compostela in terms of the number of visitors. The motivations and profile of the tourists who arrive require services adapted to their abilities in order to enjoy quality tourism and have a complete experience. This proposal allows to follow the steps and actions developed to turn the town into a more sustainable destination and, in the same way, that can serve as an example for other regions.

II. Theoretical framework

In order to elaborate on the terms that pertain to this topic, there are definitions from different authors who have studied and researched accessibility and inclusion in tourism. Accessible tourism is, therefore, a form of tourism that involves strategically planned collaborative processes between stakeholders, enabling people with access requirements, including mobility, vision, hearing and cognitive abilities, to function independently and with equity and dignity through the provision of tourism products, services and environments based on universal law (Darcy & Dickson, 2009). In turn, Medina defines accessible tourism as a positive model that makes it possible to achieve the optimisation of tourism infrastructures, especially in those of greatest use; on the basis that it benefits a market that goes beyond people with disabilities. A way to diversify and differentiate the products of the tourist destination, making them safer, fairer and more sustainable; improving the quality perceived by visitors in the services they hire (Medina, 2017). Likewise, the tourism sector, beyond focusing on making investments in infrastructure, needs a change of mentality that makes it viable to build a chain of universal accessibility throughout the entire process, from beginning to end (Pérez García & Hernández González, 2023).

On the other hand, inclusive tourism became more relevant in 1989, when a group of tourism experts from the United Kingdom published the report "Tourism for all" (Correa Pérez, Aquino Zúñiga, & De la Cruz Villegas, 2020).

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Thus, definitions such as Tejada's refer to inclusive tourism as a form of tourism that plans, designs and develops leisure and free-time tourism activities so that they can be enjoyed by all kinds of people regardless of their physical, social or cultural conditions (Tejada, 2017).

Tourism must aim to achieve integral accessibility, based on the observation of the techniques that allow a product, service or environment to be usable or passable for any person regardless of the degree or type of loss of ability, whether physical, mental or sensory (Molina Hoyo & Cánoves Valiente, 2010). It is more common to find Plans, Strategies, action measures or news about specific initiatives on accessibility than universal and accessible tourism products or destinations in themselves (Alvarado Corrales, 2013).

Throughout his or her life, a person will experience episodes in which his or her abilities are affected. In some cases, it becomes a permanent disability, referring to physical or motor activity, sensory, mental or multiple diversities; in other cases it is affected by age, both in older and younger people; and in a third case by transitory circumstances, due to physical or communicative capacities, pregnancy or having reduced mobility or communication on an occasional basis (Molina Hoyo & Cánoves Valiente, 2010). In fact, the WHO estimates that 1.3 billion people, i.e. 1 in 6 people worldwide and 16% of the world's population, suffer from a significant disability (World Health Organization, 2023).

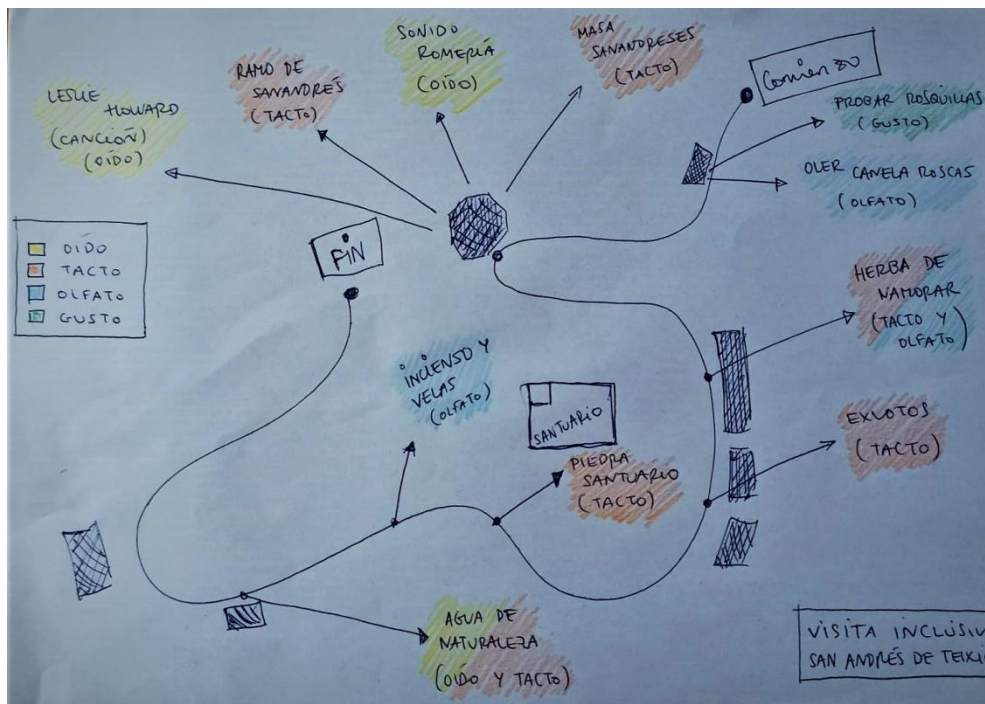
Therefore, it is advisable to develop and work on the basis of a tourism that takes into account human diversity and therefore a quality tourism (Martín Cano, Luque Serrano, & De la Fuente Robles, 2018).

III. Methodology

The analysis carried out and presented in this work is the result of the information collected through different methodological tools. Primary and secondary sources have been used to obtain the information and elaborate the results.

First of all, it is worth mentioning the fieldwork at the destination, through technical analysis, in order to gain first-hand and detailed knowledge of the destination's characteristics. For this purpose, it was necessary, through active participant observation, to carry out a sound study of the designed visit in order to identify other resources that can be perceived through all the senses and to bring the visit as close as possible to the term "inclusion". The layout of the actual map is shown in Spanish with its colour coding (yellow: hearing, red: touch, blue: smell, green: taste) just to know how it was designed.

Figure 1. Sensory analysis of the environment



Source. Own elaboration

Secondly, a technical analysis of accessibility in the centre of San Andrés de Teixido was carried out, identifying the points that present physical barriers for people with certain functional diversities. Through participant observation,

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it was possible to gather information on this aspect. However, this perception was completed with the experience of the people participating in the activity in the place who are wheelchair users, blind or other diversities. At this point, primary sources were mainly used, such as interviews or direct assessments by the participants.

The assessments made correspond mainly to the evaluation of the group of blind people from the Igualar Association, who, after having attended a guided inclusive visit carried out by Eufundevivo as a pilot test of the proposal. Once the visit was over, the participants were consulted about their feelings and opinions about the experience, as well as once they had returned to their point of origin through the person responsible for the group, who was able to gather more specific information about each person. With regard to the interviews, mention should be made of the one carried out with the ASCM Sociocultural Association, who, after having completed the Camiño Vello, shared their experience and evaluations, both of the itinerary and of the centre of San Andrés de Teixido itself.

On the other hand, as part of a parallel investigation of the destination, a survey was carried out to find out the profile of the demand, with a sample of 399 surveys. The study was carried out using a form created with Microsoft Forms software and in person in the village, approaching visitors once they had finished their visit and were about to leave the place. One of the variables of the form consists of an open-ended question in which visitors can propose improvements for the village, so those contributions related to accessibility and that promote a more inclusive tourism have been reflected in this study. Besides these sources and research tools, secondary sources have been consulted in order to have a better knowledge of the topics dealt with in the article. The websites of the associations that participated in the interviews and assessments, the ONCE, the Federation of Autism of Galicia or Aragon and other documents and scientific articles dealing with these aspects, have been very useful to deepen and facilitate the implementation of the actions. Through these sources, it has been possible to collect ideas such as the creation of models for the interpretation of the route or the design of pictograms for people with psychic functional diversities.

IV. Results

Visitors arriving at a destination can make use of the different tourism services or consume products from the tourism offer, but in many cases, these are not prepared for all types of needs. Each person has different capacities that can be accentuated to a greater extent depending on age, a temporary physical condition, a disability or other similar situation.

For this reason, tourism should consider creating inclusive and adapted products, without having to readjust the product each time a different audience is received. This can be achieved with the use of interpretative tools, in the case of guided tours, such as those described below, for the creation of a guided tour in San Andrés de Teixido, which can serve as an example to be replicated in other destinations.

The destination, during phase 2, was subsequently used for the design of a guided tour. From the point of view of the current analysis, it is worth mentioning that it was a tourist product that excluded certain people according to their abilities. In addition, it had collaborators who played a dynamic role by transmitting their knowledge and their way of life linked to the destination. This is the case of artisans, shopkeepers, doughnut sellers or the local priest, who will still be part of the visit but who, to a certain extent, will have a more limited participation in accordance with their ability to communicate with people who have different abilities to those of many of the visitors they are used to dealing with.

Therefore, the guide will take on a more relevant role in the use of interpretative tools and resources for cultural dissemination in an inclusive and universal way. It is necessary to integrate all the people who make up the group from the very beginning of the visit, responding to the idea of "total inclusion".

The reason for the new design and implementation of the guided tour arose from the request to guide a group of blind people who asked to visit the Eu Fun de Vivo project. From this moment on, the aim is to integrate the proposed interpretative tools to the initial guided tour, redesigning the aspects considered and approaching the content in a more inclusive way.

1.1. Technical analysis of the route

In the creation and design phase of the guided tour route, it was necessary to carry out a technical analysis of the mobility accessibility of the site. After having carried out the fieldwork, it was found that San Andrés de Teixido is not easily accessible for people with functional diversities related to mobility and motor activities. The pavement is made up of cobblestones with potholes along the road, posing a risk for many people with different abilities.

Figure 2. Technical analysis of the centre in San Andrés de Teixido.

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Access to the sanctuary



Pavement



Access to toilets



Shelter



Descent to the sanctuary



Access ramp

Source. Own elaboration

The elements shown in the table refer to the technical analysis of the itinerary. It is convenient to detail each one of them in order to identify in a more concrete way the barriers that are found, in this case in San Andrés de Teixido. It has similarities with many other tourist destinations and urban centres.

- **Access to the sanctuary:** In the frequent accesses to the sanctuary, there are no doors without architectural barriers, as there are steps at the entrance. Recently, a series of portable wooden ramps have been prepared that allow them to be installed without making any changes to the architecture; however, there are still many accesses that do not have them.

- **Pavement:** The pavement on the path leading down to the sanctuary, from the moment one leaves the parking area, is made of cobblestone, which makes it difficult for visitors using wheelchairs. The resolution of this type of barrier is not usually straightforward as it is a site protected by heritage laws. However, it is possible to keep the road in the best possible condition for its use, avoiding deterioration or breakage of the stones, causing potholes.

- **Access to toilets:** Accessibility to the toilets is limited as there are steps and a field area between the path and the entrance. This presents a barrier for wheelchair users as freedom of movement and manoeuvre is reduced, and the accessible toilet is out of order.

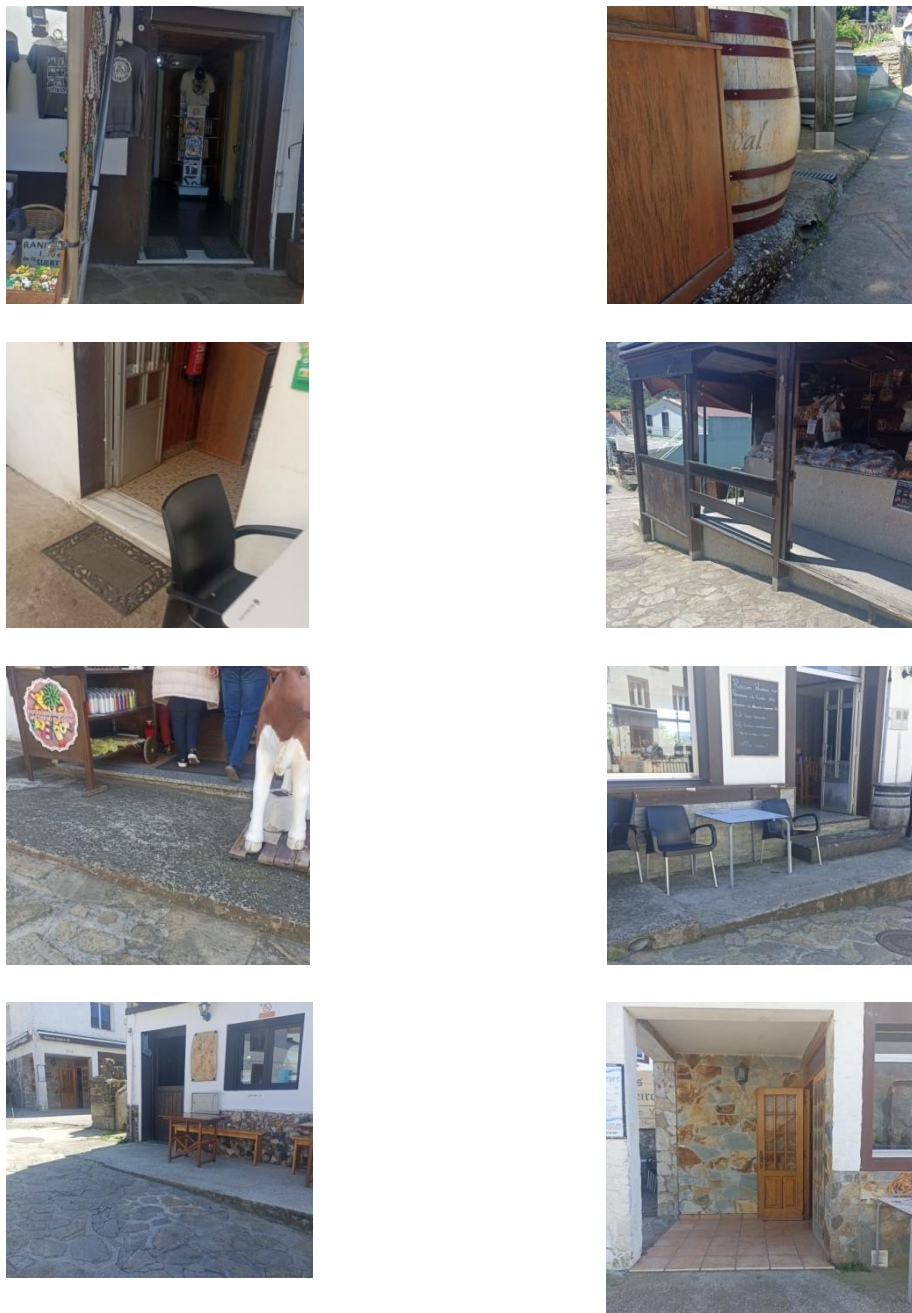
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- **Shelter:** The main shed of the picnic area has a step at the entrance. In many cases, as stated by one of the interviewees who is also a wheelchair user: "3 centimetres can become a real barrier".

- **Descent to the sanctuary:** This path, as mentioned with the access, presents an added difficulty due to its cobblestones. It also has several steep areas along its route which increase the risk of an accident or the need for support. The signposting of the road can be a measure to favour inclusion in the destinations for wheelchair users.

In addition to these aspects, there are more points in the village that present architectural barriers for people with reduced mobility and wheelchair users. This is the case of the existing establishments and shops, as they are located in traditional dwellings, which are not very easy to access and move around in. The identification of elements that hinder the transit of people, according to their abilities, there is a limitation when it comes to offering quality tourism in a destination. It is therefore advisable to seek solutions and respond to the needs that are generated so as not to exclude any visitor due to existing barriers that are beyond their control.

Figure 3. Barriers in bars and shops

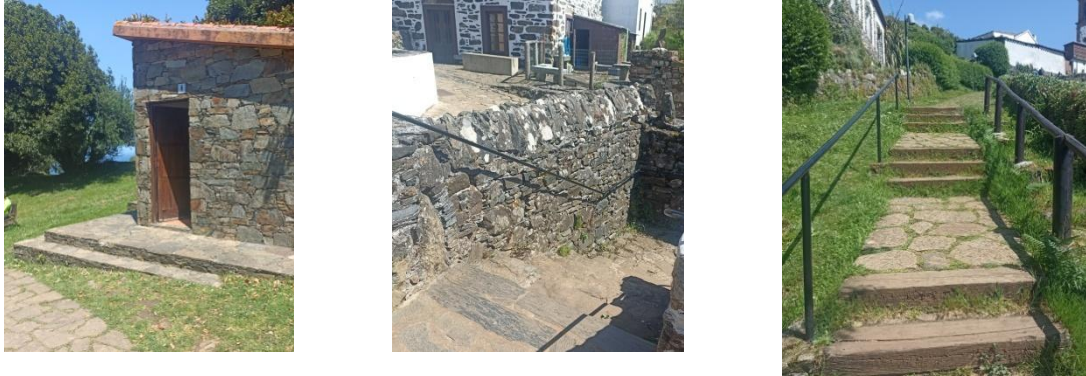


Source. Own elaboration

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Likewise, access to other resources such as the Fountain of the Saint, the baths or the chapel where the candles and votive offerings are located also has barriers that make it difficult or impossible for wheelchair users and other visitors with certain functional diversities. This type of barrier is common in rural areas that have been gradually adapted to receive visitors, as is the case of the San Andrés de Teixido sanctuary.

Figure 4. Architectural barriers in public spaces



Source. Own elaboration

1.2. Description of the stages in the guided tour

In each of the stages, different aspects of the sanctuary and the site, already described and detailed in phase 2 of the work, will be addressed, but which should be highlighted on this occasion.

Stage 1:

At the first stop on the route, the site is presented, the conditions of the terrain are explained and reference is made to the surroundings in order to situate the group. In addition, for a better understanding of the route, a model made of bread, one of the characteristic resources of the destination, is used as a physical support. This model has a central part that simulates the route, which can be appreciated by touch. To simulate the architecture, the figures have been made from breadcrumbs and a layer of colour has been applied to them, respecting the usual colours of the buildings in the area. The part that shows the route has been kept natural to emphasise the importance of the material used to make it. The whole set has been placed on a wooden plank and painted with the typical aniline paints.

The fact of using this type of interpretative resource adds value to the product itself. In addition, models are a good tool for facilitating communication and understanding, so the location of a fixed resource of this type in the vicinity of the sanctuary can be an action that favours inclusive tourism.

Figure 5. Model of the guided tour



Source. Own elaboration

Stage 2

This second stage takes place on the path that leads to the picnic area, an ideal area for its tranquillity and where the toilets are also located. Participants can access them and at the same time take

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advantage of the low flow of visitors to learn more about some elements of the place and develop some group dynamics. For example, at this point we wanted to refer to the typical local handicrafts, the Sanandreses, with the use of various interpretative tools that are discussed below:

Bread dough: The usual bread dough used to make the sanandreses has been prepared, so that the participants can touch, appreciate the texture and try to mould some of the figures.

Sanandreses: The different pieces of handicrafts were distributed among the participants, once they had been baked, to check the final result after they had been baked in the oven. Some of them have been presented unpainted and others with the corresponding paint already applied, so that certain differences in their feel and roughness can be appreciated. It is important to pay attention to the dynamics, as there are moments and resources that allow for greater interaction between the guide and the audience, as was the case here. After having distributed the figures among the people in the group, as they played them, they asked which piece they were playing, as they could not see it.

Figure 6. Traditional unpainted bread handicrafts



Source. Own elaboration

In this second phase, reference was also made to the "Herba de namorar", whose scientific name is identified with *Armeria marítima*. Different samples were distributed among the participants in order to be able to interpret it better.

On the other hand, in this phase, two other senses, taste and smell, have been promoted through the popular "roscas de yema" (egg yolk doughnuts). The prominent smell of cinnamon evokes a San Andrés de Teixido full of street vendors on a day of pilgrimage. And through the taste, we are invited to appreciate first-hand its characteristic taste.

Finally, with the intention of going to the next stop, a typical song of the San Andrés de Teixido pilgrimage known as "As tres comadres" is played. In this way, the aim is to involve and transmit the liveliness of this dynamic and unique resource in the place through the ear.

Stage 3

The third stage takes place in the central part of the village, next to the area of souvenir shops and taverns. At this stop, the environment in which the participants find themselves at that moment is explained, attention is paid to the commercial bustle and the well-known bouquet of St. Andrew is presented and the participants who wish can touch it for a better understanding of its elements. This is another opportunity for interaction through interpretative tools.

Stage 4

The last stage takes the group to the gates of the sanctuary, where its architecture is explained and characteristic features, such as the stone ribbon with lime, are detailed. This feature serves as a further interpretative resource that participants can approach and touch.

On the other hand, it is possible to enter the interior of the temple and become familiar with the smell of candles and incense; to feel how the outside sound is minimised by the walls of the sanctuary and which envelops all participants in a different environment that had not been achieved so far during the course of the visit. On leaving the sanctuary, the tradition of going to San Andrés de Teixido after death is explained, at which time the way in which the

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living used to call the dead from the cemetery is represented, an action characterised by the sound of three heels on the ground.

Finally, by way of farewell, reference is made to other events that accompany the place, such as the death of the well-known actor Leslie Howard off the coast of Ortegal. For this purpose, his soundtrack is played so that participants can identify him and contextualise the event in a more pleasant way. In this case, music can be an interpretative tool that awakens the audience's interest and stimulates the senses.

1.3. Evaluation of the guided tour by the participants

The guided tour was analysed and tested before being carried out, with the appropriate adaptations. However, the aim was to compare the result of the product with the participants so that they could provide an assessment of it.

Therefore, after having carried out the consultation, the group concluded that the experience was positive. The model has been highlighted, as for people with reduced visibility it is a resource that facilitates the interpretation of the route to be followed, and allows them to contextualise the destination by touching it. "A way of seeing the destination with your hands", as Elena, the group's coordinator, pointed out. At the same time, the fact that the guide has used a series of interpretative tools has made the explanations more comprehensible, as through the senses they have been able to appreciate a part of the destination that would be impossible to discover in any other way.

1.4. Camiño Vello. Assessment of pilgrims with reduced mobility.

Another of the analyses carried out, to address aspects related to accessibility and inclusion, was the pilgrimage carried out by the ASCM Sociocultural Association. For a week they made the route of Camiño Vello, starting from Ferrol and ending in San Andrés de Teixido, with a group of pilgrims in wheelchairs accompanied by a team of volunteers.

In the interview held in the Social Club of A Gándara (Ferrol), with the director, the technician and a representative of the group of pilgrims of the association, it has been possible to observe aspects that require improvement. Maybe in future interventions that affect the Camino and the nucleus of San Andrés de Teixido will be taken into consideration.

A final conclusion that should be taken into account from the beginning is that "the Way of San Andrés de Teixido is suitable for wheelchair users, depending on the type of chair they have and with a support team", as they say. Those who use mountain wheelchairs or "handbikes" are those who have a greater ease to reach the goal, as well as those who have electrical supports.

On the other hand, in order to make the Camino more accessible it needs a series of improvements and maintenance. During the interview, other proposals that can serve to make this pilgrimage route a more inclusive itinerary have been pointed out and put on the table. To classify these suggestions and statements according to their typology, they are distributed in Route, those referring to the way, and in Center, in the case of referring to the populated area of San Andrés de Teixido. There is a mixed category which groups the two categories together. Table 4 can serve as a reflection of other pilgrimage itineraries or routes that pass through natural spaces, since on many occasions the needs identified in this type of resources are similar.

Figure 7. Observation and improvements of the Camiño Vello

Type	Observation
Route	Improve the width of roads to make them suitable for wheelchair users.
Route	Protect pedestrians in areas of urban stretches and more dangerous roads.
Route	Avoid certain pavements when maintaining routes, such as gravel or slippery materials.
Route	Expand catering services for pilgrims along the route.
Route	Revise the beginning of the route from Porto do Cabo to allow greater accessibility for wheelchair users.
Route	Create spaces and rest areas for people with reduced mobility, such as toilets, benches, tables or fountains.
Route	Keeping the paths practicable for the transit of heavy vehicles. It is mainly machines linked to the forestry sector that leave the path impassable, as they create holes in the

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	ground that become waterlogged in times of rain.
Route	Maintain the route of the road free of vegetation on the road. This aspect presents great difficulty as the environment and weather conditions make it easy for shrubs and branches to fall. However, reference is made to cases in which the route is cleaned and, once the vegetation on the path has been cleared and cut, it is not removed from the path.
Route	Create supports such as handrails or portable handrails, either with ropes or other materials appropriate to the environment, which can be used to hold on to on steeper and more difficult stretches.
Route/Centre	Fit out any accommodation that may be created in the future to ensure universal access, or at least as far as possible. Avoid double heights without access for people with reduced mobility.
Route/Centre	Establish recharging points for electric wheelchairs along the Camino and at some points in the centre.
Route/Centre	Create inclusive tourism products that do not exclude anyone on the basis of their abilities.
Route/Centre	Adapt the viewpoints so that they can be used by everyone. In some cases, such as Cape Ortegá, people in wheelchairs cannot see beyond the wall surrounding the lighthouse.
Route/Centre	Avoid small kerbs or elements that cause an unevenness by using different architectural resources, or adapting the spaces with mobile elements.
Centre	Organise and create a distribution of spaces in shops and bars so that they can be used by all people regardless of their characteristics.
Centre	Signposting critical points of the destination, such as slopes, steps or difficult access points, in order to avoid accidents.
Centre	Make toilets available for people with disabilities.
Centre	Provide public spaces with elements that facilitate universal access, such as portable ramps where possible.
Centre	Signpost a priority space on the way down to the sanctuary where the pavement is more accessible for wheelchair users.
Centre	Install interpretive panels or resources for blind people, such as models or information points in Braille. It is possible to use other resources such as audio guides that can be accessed by telephone.

Source. Own elaboration

In addition to these proposals for improvement that affect the San Andrés de Teixido Way and the town itself, the Association also highlights the positive aspects of different actions carried out at the destination.

Figure 8. Priority parking



Source. Own elaboration

One of these actions has been the creation of parking spaces with priority for disabled people in the area closest to the access to the village. In this way, the vehicles of those visitors who do not require this facility will park in one of the areas set aside for this purpose, further away from the centre, while disabled people can park closer to the village. It should be added that parking is one of the aspects most frequently mentioned by visitors in an analysis of the profile of demand.

Figure 9. Access ramp to the sanctuary



Fuente. Elaboración propia

Another action has been the placement of mobile ramps to allow access to those who cannot overcome the unevenness of the entrance. This is an initiative carried out by the priest of San Andrés de Teixido, so it is worth highlighting the awareness of the official bodies and social actors involved in the destination in order to achieve inclusive tourism. However, a ramp made of a different material is required so that it does not deteriorate at a high rate.

Finally, and contrary to this awareness, reference is made to the lack of sensitivity in decision making regarding heritage, as on many occasions people with certain functional diversities are not taken into account. The elimination of certain barriers could bring destinations closer to full inclusion without affecting, in these cases, the state and characteristics of the heritage asset that it is intended to protect and preserve.

4.2.1. Creation of pictograms and distribution in San Andrés de Teixido

Pictograms are another of the actions carried out to strengthen the destination as a more inclusive place. The author of the Economipedia page defines a pictogram as a graphic representation understood as a sign that conveys information about a specific object in a figurative way without the need to use language (Rodó, 2020). These elements facilitate communication for people with certain psychic functional diversities.

In the case of San Andrés de Teixido, each of the pictograms has been adapted to the type of establishment in question. Thus, there is the restaurant or tavern, the rural house, the craft, souvenir or food shop and the sanctuary. It is possible to adapt the pictogram designs to the needs of each destination.

Figure 10. Pictographs of San Andrés de Teixido



Source. Own elaboration

Bar -restaurant. A design of a restaurant is shown with the corresponding name for each of the catering establishments in the village.

Souvenir and food shops. A design is shown that represents the shop with a gift packet and a traditional amulet made of breadcrumbs, specifically the "sanandresiño" in the shape of a flower.

Rural house. A house is depicted against a mountain backdrop with a bed inside.

Sanctuary. A pictogram of the church of San Andrés de Teixido is recreated with its most notable features.

1.5. Other future actions and proposals for improvement

Among the future actions that can be carried out in San Andrés de Teixido are the creation of interpretative panels with Braille writing or the option of informative audio guides; the fitting out of public spaces and establishments, through the placement of mobile elements and arrangement whenever possible. It may also be advisable to increase the number of pictograms in spaces such as toilets, fountains and other points of affluence.

Another action that can be taken is learning sign language and other aspects of inclusion. Through specific training, with different themes such as languages or attention to people with reduced mobility in the tourism sector, an accessible and inclusive value chain can be built along the Way.

V. Conclusions

The Sanctuary of San Andrés de Teixido is the second most visited pilgrimage site after Santiago de Compostela and attracts a high number of visitors each year, with an estimated figure of more than 70,000 people each year. The characteristics of the visitor profile and their motivations are varied, as are the abilities of each of the people who come to the village.

Universal accessibility and the development of inclusive tourism present an opportunity for the preservation of the destination and the improvement of the quality of life, as well as for the promotion of products and services that make up the tourist offer. The awareness of the managing bodies and the development of training actions among the local population, already mentioned, bring the terms "inclusive" and "accessible" closer to the reality of the destination.

The analysis carried out aims to highlight the barriers that exist for people according to their abilities within the territory studied. Likewise, it aims to serve as a guide and inspiration for other destinations that want to take a step further in the creation of a value chain under the parameters of universal accessibility, and thus be able to replicate the actions shown according to their interests and adaptability. "Tourism for all".

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