

Luis Roman

Public Park Advocate, Social Leader and Entrepreneur

Abstract

For over eleven years I have promoted intelligent public parks in Mexico and Latin America, and the professionals who lead them, to improve the health, environment, architectural conservation and democratic development of our nations. My motivation comes from observing how well-designed parks act as dynamic laboratories in which our people can enrich and transform their lives.

My adventure with public parks began in 2010, when I founded a small consulting firm: Parques de Mexico (PdM), to address the rapidly growing demand for good public parks. With this demand for parks as our starting point - and inspired by North American and European examples of public spaces focused on the community, we developed a methodology called Construyendo Mi Parque (Building My Park). We applied this approach to nine "pop-up" parks in marginalized Mexican neighborhoods since 2015. Like KaBOOM parks in the U.S., these spaces combine PdM's organizational and recreational know-how with the enthusiasm and labor of local residents and the financial and logistical support of private sector sponsors. In parallel with these "pop-up" parks, PdM applied its design and economic consultancy services to more than fifteen medium and large-scale parks and 10 neighborhood parks around Mexico. Within a decade, the experience we acquired made us the first consulting firm in Latin America specializing in business and economic planning for public parks.

To address the needs of park professionals, in 2016 I created an umbrella organization for Mexican parks. Modeled on its U.S. counterpart, the National Association of Parks and Recreation of Mexico (ANPR Mx) provides its members with professional development, educational products and services, and park advocacy alongside networking opportunities, job contacts, leadership training and access to information on developments in the sector around the world. We also analyze trends and generate studies on the recreational industry, and work with our members to craft legislation benefiting public parks and the recreation industry.

As ANPR Mx's first president and CEO, I moved quickly to expand our presence in Latin America, organizing the 1st International Congress of Urban Parks in Merida, Mexico (2018). Over the past three years, we have drawn over 4,000 participants and 150 companies from 25 countries to 4 international congresses. ANPR's online promotion of products and services now represents the largest community of park and recreation professionals in Latin America, offering a digital library, webinars, parks magazine, podcasts, career services page, professional directory, and mentoring and volunteering opportunities.

ANPR's emergence appearance on the scene has been enthusiastically embraced by international parks organizations. I am on the Board of Directors of the World Urban Parks Organization (2019); the City Parks Alliance (2018); and as a vice-chair and Board Member of the World Parks Academy (2018). My work includes an active speaking schedule at conferences in the U.S., Colombia, Chile, Peru, Argentina and Ecuador. And in 2018, I published the book Building My Park - From Citizen Participation to Public Space Administration.

In the past year I co-founded a nonprofit organization related to art and culture in public spaces. Our mission is to promote cultural activities in urban parks through curatorship, management and events organization.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

ANPR (National Association of Parks and Recreation)

President and CEO

[Jul 2016 – Present]

- Responsible for the day-to-day management of the organization; adhering to the organization's mission and strategic plan; and providing leadership to all operational areas of the organization
- Developing an educational model to promote professional development among our audiences
- Working closely with governmental institutions, citizens, developers and stakeholders to promote advocacy for urban parks and public spaces
- Curation process to choose speakers and conferences in the editions of Parks Congress.
- Curation process for the development and production of educational content in the organization
- Overseeing all areas of resource development, including contracts, grant writing, fundraising, community outreach, community relations, effective program implementation and public policy
- Development of studies and research
- Organization of the International Congress of Urban Parks Mexico & South America (5)
- Building relationships with international organizations to position the issue of urban parks not only in Mexico but throughout the Latin American region
- Development of the membership system that includes the online platform for the member community, the database for management and the business model of attraction, enrollment, engagement, and retention.

Parques de Mexico (Parks of Mexico)

President and CEO

[February 2010 – Present]

- Responsible for day-to-day leadership, adherence to mission and strategic plans; and provide leadership throughout the organization
- Design processes for gathering and analyzing information from park users
- Consulting processes in participatory design, master plans, business plans and management models for parks and public spaces, working in more than 20 large projects in 10 years
- Consulting processes in the design and construction of neighborhood parks through community construction models, building 10 parks in 5 years

FT7 Merida - Soccer Field Complex

Founder and CEO

[November 2009 – May 2013]

- Defined and instituted the complex business model
- Provided leadership and direction for overall complex operation
- Conducted extensive research with user interviews and surveys to define target markets and marketing strategies
- Responsible for hiring and managing a team of 40

Diez Comunicaciones (Diez Communications)

Funder and CEO

[August 2006 – October 2010]

- Defined and executed a business model for an event-planning consulting business
- Lead the development and implementation of key strategic initiatives
- Coordinated and implemented promotional and marketing activities
- Served as a consultant to nonprofit organizations on fundraising strategies

Tecnologico de Monterrey (Monterrey Institute of Technology)

Student Development Department - Director

[April 2004 – August 2006]

- Coordinated and promoted student leadership programs
- Administrated more than 250 student groups with over 3,500 students
- Lowered total student group debt from \$1.3 million to \$0.3 million in two years
- Responsible for a team of 35

Instituto Nuevo Amanecer A.B.P. - Cerebral Palsy Nonprofit Organization

Fundraising Coordinator

[August 2002 – March 2004]

- Coordinated and promoted fundraising activities
- Recruited, managed and motivated volunteers to achieve organizational goals
- Raised over \$500K for the treatment of 350+ children with cerebral palsy

EDUCATION

Master of Science in Education and Communication

Tecnologico de Monterrey

December, 2002 (one credit left to completion)

Bachelor of Science in Marketing

Tecnologico de Monterrey

December, 2000

Diploma Intensive Integrated Skills Course

Harvard Extension School

Fall Semester, 1996

SKILLS

Exceptional community and stakeholder relations skills

Exceptional leadership skills with a direct approach to staff management and interaction

Exceptional financial acumen and operations management expertise

Resource development and community engagement experience

Governance and strategic planning skills

Bilingual in Spanish/English