



Visit to Skål club Valparaiso and Viña del Mar

Following our visit to the club of Villa la Angostura in Argentina, we had pleasure to share time with friends from Skål club of Valparaiso in Chile.



After visiting Skål club in Villa la Angostura in Patagonia, Argentina, it was time to visit another club of this international organization. As it was case with the first visit, welcomeness and hospitality we received were outstanding, showing us one more time that generosity is common word for all skalleagues we met.

Skål club Valparaiso is one of the oldest in South America and dates back to the early '50s of the XX c. Today's club includes members who participated in the creation of the club meaning that some of them are part of Skål network for more than 50 years! Current president Carlos Jelvez Martinez pays high attention to the cooperation of the club with other institutions and that was one of the key aspects of our visit.

During our stay he organized an agenda full of meetings with different stakeholders, so once again we were able to speak with public and private institutions, hoteliers and educational bodies. It gave us great insight in current tourism development in Valparaiso and Viña del Mar and activities of Skål club. As we could learn, although there are efforts to pay more attention to sustainability and implement good practices, as a destination Viña del Mar is still far from the desired result. As it is case with many places we have visited so far, lack of incentive from the public sector is one of the key issues that tourism stakeholders are facing. Hoteliers, tour operators and other tourism business are only now showing interest for sustainability certification when they have realized that these concepts are highly appreciated by visitors and receive significant attention in online media.

One of the efforts to bring tourism to a higher level and to incentive more sustainable management of the destination is the creation of a Tourism development plan (Plan de desarrollo de turismo – PLADATUR). It is part of a much bigger Community development plan (Plan de desarrollo communal – PLADECO) and it is first of its kind in Viña del Mar. Different sides were included in its creation trying with that to take into consideration distinctive points of view, different needs and ideas. On the other hand, while visiting regional tourism office (Servicio Nacional de Turismo- SERNATUR) we have learned that they work a lot on education and training, not only with people involved in tourism but as well with service providers, producers, citizens.

Break from meetings and important topics was made with two beautiful city tours provided by Adeturs (Association of Sustainable Tourism Entrepreneurs). They showed us all corners of Valparaiso and Viña del Mar, introducing us to rich history of this region and Chile's most important port.

Second day of our visit included several activities at Institute for higher education – INACAP. We had a chance to give a lecture to first year students of tourism and hospitality and introduce them to our Latin American project and sustainable tourism development. One part of our discussion was dedicated to Young Skål initiative and students showed great interest for this type of activism and career development in tourism. It was important to see that they are ready to take advice and suggestions at this early stage of their career and progress further with broader views about possibilities in tourism and hospitality. Following the lecture was lunch which was prepared by students as a part of their culinary class. They are responsible for everything, from cooking to arranging and serving while recipes come as a combined effort with their professors. They work a lot on innovation and unusual combinations of ingredients, so we were presented with unique meals based on “fine dining” concept.



Visit to our skalleagues and friends ended with a special invitation that Skål club Villa la Angostura prepared for members of the club Valparaiso and Viña del Mar. It was an invitation for next year's congress which we handed in to club's President Carlos Jelvez Martinez and we hope that many skalleagues from Chile will visit Villa la Angostura in April 2019. This meeting was used as well to present our Skål club of Rome and activities of Young Skål. Category of Young Skål is not present so much in Latin America and after our meeting and visit to the university, teachers and students were highly interested in establishing one club of this kind in Valparaiso.

Our journey now continues through Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador and Colombia. We hope that we will have chance to visit clubs in these countries as well and to expand the network of skalleagues around the region. We thank Skål club Valparaiso on every single detail and hospitality received and hope to be back in this lovely place sometime in the future.

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