

**Weavers Training Program**  
**Peru**  
**Brown University**  
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The aim of this project is to strengthen and encouraging the active participation of women in socio-economic development was the key factor that allowed them to improve their financial situation. To achieve this, the project looked forward to developing a sustainable market strategy that lifts economically marginalized women in Peru out of poverty through education and skills training.

To achieve this, the project focused on providing access to industry textile work of a group of 60 women in the marginal district of San Juan de Lurigancho. Currently, we have taught them embroidery and needlework on fabric, which are finished into sheep and alpaca wool for sale in global markets. This year, we also plan on supplementing their skills training with an entrepreneurship curriculum. Our long term aim is to ensure a community buy-in, so that the women have complete ownership of the enterprise.

I believe in change that lasts. We do not just connect the girls and women to viable markets. Instead, we teach them how to do market research so they can find their own markets. With the project's sustainability in mind, we find that the women benefitted will be able to access a steady source of income and life skills without failing to care for their chores in the household.

In order to achieve such an ambitious goal, I did struggle at first to find a strong trust relationship with beneficiaries for the project. Many housewives were more than happy to benefit from this service and I came to be touched by their aspirations and prospects for their future and their families'. This only motivated me to get the project off the ground, even when challenges seemed overwhelming.

The structure of this project in terms of four tangible results which progressed into completion by stages, the projects developed. I will address their difficulties and successes one by one.

The first objective answers to logistics. I became apparent that in order to carry through this project efficiently and sustainably, I needed to develop institutional local alliances that would allow me to both receive feedback and strengthen the quality of service provided to the beneficiaries. This proved to be a winning strategy, since over the course of the project's completion a local hub of support became vital to sustain ties with the community. I started contacting several local organizations which had the interest of developing skills for women. The non-profit organization with whom I ended up partnering with, Asociacion de Desarrollo Comunal, had an extensive background and experience in women's rights. In their sixteen years of work, they have received international funds to support marginalized low income women. Within this institution, they provided me with invaluable knowledge and resources to maintain contact with the women. It is with their support that I also found adequate nearby locations to instruct beneficiaries of the project and the necessary equipment to help them become competent weavers.

The next objective was possible precisely because of this allegiance. I had to supervise a curriculum that would allow women to develop their expertise in two areas of specialty: handmade or machinery weaving. For the development of this curriculum and the teaching of the course, a very skillful weaving teacher was hired. She had experience working in the community's center for competency development. She was extremely responsive to the beneficiaries' needs and had no problem adapting the schedule of lessons to make sure the women were receiving high quality instruction. It is at this point where we found the first set of major difficulties. Because all these women were heavily involved with matters of the

household, some of them could not make all meetings or were sometimes delayed. The teacher turned out to have great initiative when solving logistical problems. She was willing to make up classes and even divided groups in order to make it feasible for beneficiaries to take advantage of their education. At one point, she even offered her house and some of the machines for the women to practice.

In addition to mentoring me on how to sustain these relationships, the Asociación de Desarrollo Comunal also helped me organize and structure the progression of this project by encouraging me to have constant feedback from the students. I came to understand that sometimes not all opinions are expressed through direct inquiry. Rather, true understanding of the project's suitability was understood as I developed a stronger relationship with them. It was indeed, not a matter of merely overseeing a project, but of getting to understand the women intimately, getting to know them through their different facets as mothers, daughters, wives and values members of the community. Most importantly, this endowed me with perspective and the understanding of the impact of the project on their lives.

This led me to address a third important component of the project I had previously overlooked: the need for the women to understand their rights in the workplace, so that they may as well understand the health risks of long working hours, and the hazards involved when working in the textile sector. This led me to, with the help of the organization, put together a guide on health risk prevention and setting up a workshop that introduced the concept of working rights in the household.

The fourth and last objective will be developed through the course of this semester. The commercial promotions and diffusion of these women's work will be managed through a portfolio of products that will be distributed to various entities in the surrounding areas and internationally. I will try expand the network of sales by raising awareness in my campus of the benefits of socially aware purchases.

In the long run, I hope this project endows these women with the ability to earn an extra source of income for their households. They are really adamant in improving the living conditions of their families, with many of them prioritizing this extra income to their children's future. If anything, I hope my projects I hope my projects helped their already challenging lives by giving them some piece of mind. This peace, I believe, comes from their realization that they can effectively improve their lives, and those of their families. comes from, I feel truly grateful for having helped these women in their process of empowerment and hope to be extending the impact of their work in the future.

I am a firm believer that it is only through educating and increasing the human capital of women in impoverished communities that we can they can overcome the extreme poverty. I am truly proud of the work I have been performing this summer. What made this project so meaningful to the community was its sustained value.

What I tried to teach them through this project was that they should trust and have faith in themselves, because those attributes are they true core which would allow them to keep exceeding their obstacles. What I did not realize until the very end was that I had been receiving their faith and trust as well. Being worthy of such precious gifts endows one with the ability to face life's challenges.



Woman producing a piece of clothing by handmade crocheting and needlework



Me discussing with them the possibility of selling their production overseas



The women producing garments using sewing machines