



## A Sense of Place: Sustainability and the Artisan Sector in Peru

Wednesday, April 23, 2014 | Lima, Peru

Ms. Peggy Clark, Director of the Alliance for Artisan Enterprise and Vice President of Policy Programs at The Aspen Institute, welcomed craft and sustainability experts to discuss the exemplary case of Peru – a pioneer in the global handicraft market. Clark commenced the breakfast roundtable with introductions, posing a poignant question to each participant.

“When have you been inspired by the artisan sector?” Mariana Costa, Co-Founder and Director of ICTs for Development at Techno Serve said, “As a Peruvian, I cannot remember a time when I was not inspired by the artisan sector. It is rooted in my culture and my upbringing.” Clark’s opening remarks included a thought-provoking reminder of the significance of the term sustainability

– ensuring our current actions do not jeopardize the wellbeing of future generations. This highlighted the connection between people and place in the context of development. Featured speaker, Ms. Nilda Callañaupa Alvarez, Founder & Director of the Centro de Textiles Tradicionales del Cusco, is an acclaimed weaver and community leader who has experienced firsthand

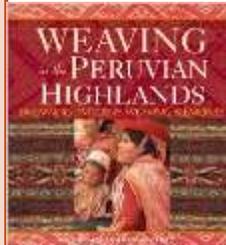
## A Sense of Place

the impact of environmental degradation on rural artisan communities. “Damage to the earth is inspiration to take action and to position artisans in social and economic spaces,” Callañaupa declared. The artisans of CTTC have a strong tradition of integrating symbolism from nature into their works. Biodiversity is vital to the customs of Chinchero (Cusco), from natural dyeing to harvesting wool from the alpaca. Ancient techniques that were once in danger of extinction are now a symbol of regional pride. Callañaupa empowers young women like Maribel Quispe, a skilled weaver who recently returned to the CTTC community after pursuing her academic studies. Strides in economic development have fostered education within the artisan community, which means that more indigenous women are demanding dignity and equity in their work. The value of our work is rising,” Callañaupa explained. Reclaiming customs and places are therefore inextricably linked.



Ms. Maribel Quispe of CTTC demonstrates an intricate weaving technique at the Swiss Ambassador's residence, in celebration of 50 years of cooperation between Peru and Switzerland.

### TO READ: FEATURED BOOKS ON THE PERUVIAN ARTISAN SECTOR



Callañaupa, Nilda. Weaving in the Peruvian Highlands: Dreaming Patterns, Weaving Memories. Thrums, LLC. 2013



Aguirre, Diana. El sombrero de paja de Catacaos: tejiendo su historia. MINCETUR. 2013.



Adrienne Chaille (Partner, Green Design Link), Monica Lofruscio (Embassy of Switzerland in Peru), Madeleine Burns Vidaurrazaga (National Director of Handicrafts, MINCETUR), and Marcela Contreras (Owner, weavers & designers) converse about sustainability and the artisan sector.

## Creating sustainable value chains in the artisan sector

Closing the gap between producers and consumers is a vital step toward sustainable value chains in the Peruvian artisan sector, says Ms. Madeleine Burns, National Director of Handicrafts at the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism (MINCETUR), Peru. While the agency PROMPERU – Peru’s commission for promotion of exportation and tourism – focuses on proposing and executing strategic plans that advance the country’s image at the international level, Burns emphasized the responsibility of MINCETUR, as the governing body,

to leverage data and statistics about the handicraft industry to strengthen artisan businesses and cooperate with other institutions to inform artisans and artisan leaders. Building on the momentum of Peru MODA XVII and Peru MODA, which opened its doors to 2,000 buyers from 60 countries in San Isidro, Lima on April 9, 2014, Burns underlined how effective branding and marketing have contributed to positioning Peru MODA as the second largest export platform for textiles in Latin America. She also reminded distinguished participants of the significant role that Peru’s

unique bio and cultural diversity have played in shaping its success in global handmade markets. The quality and high standards of Peruvian products is rooted in its unique resources and traditions. Ms. Burns summarized by stating that the intrinsic connection between environmental and cultural resources, including local

knowledge, implies that rescuing Peruvian traditions is indeed a profitable business. Alpaca, *toquilla* straw, Pima cotton, and the many natural fibers native to Peru are what set the country apart as a resilient and competitive market, along with its superior craftsmanship and commitment to advancement.



Ms. Emily Green (Founder & Lead Designer, Green Design Link) and Mr. Jaime Arturo Giesecke (FOMIN Lider Peru Representative, Inter-American Development Bank).

### Linking Women Entrepreneurs to Big Businesses

As Director of Peru at WEConnect International, Ms. Claudia Leno Montero appreciates the challenge presented by the gap in the value chain, which hinders women entrepreneurs from establishing connections with international vendors. Ms. Leno has made it her business to establish supplier-client relationships for over 400 businesses in Peru. WEConnect, a member of the Alliance, provides capacity building opportunities at both the export level and between businesses. Leno recognized the exceptional opportunity that women have to impact the handicraft sector. The vast majority of entrepreneurs who participate in PERU MODA are women, yet women continue to earn 10% of global income. Dr. Rosalia Arteaga Serrano, President of Fundacion FIDAL, noted that in addition to linking women to buyers, more innovative enterprising opportunities are needed that leverage design and technology to help distinguish and add value to different cultural products in order to promote authenticity in the market.



Ms. Claudia Leno, Director of Peru, WEConnect International, (left), and Ms. Nilda Callañaupa Alvarez, Founder & Director of CTTC (center) listen to Dr. Rosalia Arteaga Serrano, first female President of Ecuador and President of Fundacion FIDAL, speak on the subject of globalization and cultural identity.

## Juana Solano Chavez

2013 National Amatas Prize for Craft, MINCETUR

La Campiña, Catacaos, Piura



Photo: Desyree Valdiviezo

Ms. Juana Solano Chavez is President of Asociación de Artesanas Virgen del Pilar, an organization of 50 women artisans who weave sombreros from *toquilla* straw. UNESCO has declared this craft as an intangible cultural heritage. Run by Rural, an Alliance member, partners with Virgen del Pilar to promote education as a conduit for profitable business and sustainable development. Each roundtable participant received a Run by Rural sombrero.

## Leveraging Sustainable Design as an Advantage in the Face of Globalization

Ms. Marcela Contreras, Owner of weavers & designers, a Peruvian company that works with mothers to create innovative designs for export, sparked a compelling discussion about how sustainability can be used as a competitive advantage in the face of globalization. Artisan entrepreneurs are currently confronted by competitors who mass-produce products and market them as “handmade.” This decreases the value of authentic artisan goods. Dr. Rosalia Arteaga, President of Fundacion FIDAL, noted that design and technology must be positioned as protagonists to combat this problem, citing Sweden’s globally recognized designs as a model. Mr. Jaime Giesecke of the Inter-American Development Bank’s FOMIN Lider program, went on to say that investing in programs that educate consumers about artisan goods is key to developing healthy competition – for people, planet, profit and culture.

## Infrastructure and Human Rights: Meeting Basic Needs of Rural Artisan Communities

Ms. Cesarina Quintana, Senior National Program Officer at the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Global Program in the Andes shared a captivating human rights perspective on the issue of sustainability in the artisan sector in Peru. While acknowledging Peru’s accomplishments, she stressed the existing inequalities that pose challenges to artisan communities. She argued that basic infrastructure, namely water and sanitation, is lacking and requires intersectorial and interdisciplinary solutions to improve rural development. Without infrastructure the full potential to take products to market will not be realized. Sustainability requires an inclusive approach, she concluded.



Cesarina Quintana , Senior National Program Officer, SDC

## Bringing Artisan Enterprise to Scale

The Alliance for Artisan Enterprise was launched at the U.S. Department of State in 2012 by Former Secretary of State, Hillary Rodham Clinton. Hosted by The Aspen Institute, it is one of five “Breakthrough Solutions” housed at Aspen Global Health and Development. The mission of the Alliance is to promote and support the full power and potential of the artisan sector. Our key objectives – to elevate the importance of the artisan sector, support and grow artisan businesses, and share best practices in a collaborative learning community – are achieved by organizing roundtable events, conducting research, and spearheading global outreach. To learn more about membership, e-mail Program Associate, [Natalie.Deuschle@aspeninst.org](mailto:Natalie.Deuschle@aspeninst.org).

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ALLIANCE

The Alliance for Artisan Enterprise would like to extend a special thanks to Ms. Nilda Callañaupa Alvarez, Founder & Director of Centro de Textiles Tradicionales del Cusco (CTTC) for joining us at our inaugural event in Peru. CTTC has employed 600 women and revived the endangered craft of weaving textiles in the village of Chinchero, by developing a sustainable artisan organization. Callañaupa is an internationally acclaimed author and scholar.

The Aspen Institute, One Dupont Circle NW, Suite 700 Washington, D.C., 20036

[www.allianceforartisanenterprise.org](http://www.allianceforartisanenterprise.org)