

Fair Trade and Joining Hands Peru celebrate the day of the Artisans.

On Saturday, March 21 The Joining Hands Network celebrated the “Day of the Peruvian Artisans”. Joining Hands convened artisans from its Fair Trade program and held an exhibition and sale of handicrafts at the Hotel Antigua in Miraflores where Joining Hands has a store that exhibits and sells crafts produced by the artisans of Junin, Huancavelica, Ayacucho, and Lima.



Between 11 am and 3 pm patrons had the opportunity to talk with various groups of artisans and admire their excellent work in fabrics, wool and silver. The following are some interviews with representatives of groups of artisans involved in the event.



Aidé Rivera Gutiérrez, a Huancavalican artisan and member of the Mercury Group.

What do you produce and how do you work as a group?

We are dedicated to producing Llamas, puppets, and stuffed animals. There are 40 women that work in my group. According to the number of requests, we work from Monday to Friday from 2 p.m. until 7 p.m.

How did you learn to weave and produce wool products?

In my childhood I learned to weave. I have always woven but I never knew how to finish a product until later, thanks to Atiypaq and Fair Trade of the Joining Hands Network, who taught us how to finish our products.

Did that help you to sell more of your product?

Yes, it has led us to sell more and to find more markets for our work. Precisely, the reason for this exhibition is so that we may sell a little more, let others know about the clothes we make, and also to recognize the "Day of the Artisan".

Is your next trip to the United States part of this search for more markets?

Yes, I am going to the United States so that I can see what kinds of things are wanted there, to see the woven work, and also to be able to share my experiences as an artisan in homeland.

And now you are celebrating "The Day of the Artisan". What does it mean to you to be an Artisan?

It means that we work with the wool that we have, that we work with our hands. We are happy that we are now recognized as artisans. I send greetings to all of the artisans of Peru, that they continue working with their crafts as we continue forward.



Ernesto Alca, artisan of the group Munay Rumi de Las Flores in Canto Grande that work in silver craftsmanship.

Tell us about your group of artisans...

I work with my companions of Munay Rumi which in Quechua means "beautiful stone". We have been together four years working in jewellery. Previously each one of us worked independently but thanks to the Joining Hands Network we formed our group in order to be able to display our work and sell our products together through the network. As a group we have improved the quality of our work. We began with very simple

designs, and now we are making jewellery that is more advanced, with resin and natural stone.

Which products do you produce the most of and sell the most of?...

Anything that is bracelet or trinket like. Really everything from earrings, rings, necklaces, chains, handmade crochets woven with threads of fine silver, and most recently we are making silver ornaments. The models that we create and design are done as a group and we have exclusive models...

Show us and tell us about some of the models you produce...

For example this is a tear or a drop of silver which has huairuro seeds inside. It's like a small box and is covered by an acrylic resin that gives the end product a shine by highlighting the huairuros. This work is a decorative work that is much finer and uses a very fine 9.99 silver; notice the quality and the watermark on the gourd. And the chain is also hand-woven with crochet and with a thread called pineapple silver because of its purity; it contains no copper, no alloy, and is fine.

We model the chacana, the Incan cross. Here we have placed a Peruvian lapis lazuli stone also called "soladita".

And what are you celebrating today, here in the Artisan store of the Joining Hands Network of Peru in the La Antigua hotel in Miraflores?

We are celebrating the day of the artisan, which is the 19th of March. Today we met with many artisans who work with our organization, the Joining Hands Network. Today, more than ever, we must value our work so that people can see that there exists a lot of creativity in our artisan brothers and sisters and that what we offer we make with a lot of care and doing so demonstrate that in this country we can all move forward.



Soledad Terrelatoc, and artisan from La Oroya that works in stick weaving. Member of the group "Warmi pamaqui" which is Quechua for "made by hand".

Tell me, how many people make up your group and for how long have you worked with fabrics?

Our group is comprised of 4 women and we have 4 years of experience working in wool crafts.

And how did you begin working together?

I only joined two years ago, when one of the ladies of the group passed away. First I received training organized by "Fair Trade" of the Joining Hands Network. We made our crafts at first with wool acrylic, and as we discovered that alpaca wool is valuable we began using this wool more as it is a resource that we have on hand.

Has this new way of working together and receiving training been a positive in your personal and family lives?

Of course, and it's not just weaving; we also receive training on values that helps us out a lot. We know that women are now contributing financially to their homes. This is a job that we like to do, and we know that our handmade products have greater value. Before, we wove and were paid very little, and now because of Fair Trade we receive fair prices for our work. Also, before when we didn't help support our homes we were dependent upon our husbands, now we value ourselves more and are supporting our homes. Now, thanks to Fair Trade, we recognize ourselves as valuable women with the ability to move forward as the artisans that we are.

And abroad, where do you sell the majority of your products?

We sell in the United States where "Fair Trade" is located and has markets for our products. And, we have received good news that our mittens will be welcome in other places of sale. In the United States we sell hats, mittens, scarves and pillows, but Vinchos are in the highest demand. Everything we produce is made from alpaca wool.



Isabel Works in Villa Maria of Triunfo with the group Imac Sumac and makes little dog shaped hats, circular shawls, bags, coveralls and alpaca wool ponchos produced in hand looms.

Isabel, how long have you worked with this group of artisans?

We've been working together for three years. We started by making scarves, hat, and bags. Later we came up with other creations like puppets in the form of monkeys and circular shawls that sell really well because of their novelty.

¿What does it mean to you to be an artisan?

It means that we work with our hands. We develop our handmade products, that we create and that Americans like. And on this day I want to send greetings to everyone, for all the artisans who are working like us in their small groups and ask them to develop new creations, new samples so that they may progress as we have.



At the end of the event, Conrado Olivera, Executive Director of the Joining Hands Network of Peru gave a word of thanks for the efforts of the artisans of the Fair Trade program.

"We want to celebrate the day of all these artisans and know that we are here united for their advancement. We recognize that each of you endeavour to honor our history, our customs and our cultures. Fair Trade recognizes those three values of the Incas: "Do not be idle," there is no Artisan that is not working continuously, every day, at night making crafts with their hands and all of the art and products you see in the exhibition. "Do not be a thief" Fair Trade stands for the respect of others. We can not take anything from someone else; it is the transparency that is reflected in the exchange, as well as in the fair prices. "Do not be a liar", it's transparency, we all know what we do, we all know and we help each other."

The event celebrating the day of the artisan closed with music and dancing in which visitors and artisans of the exhibition participated.



*Prepared by Nelson Figueroa A.
CPDR El Día del Pueblo
Associate of the Joining Hands Network of Peru
Translation by Michael Sinkler*