

PLATEÂU

COMUNIDADES MÁS UNIDAS, MÁS AMADAS, MÁS ARRIBA.
COMMUNITIES MORE UNITED, MORE LOVED, HIGHER.



Social Change and Community Development Final Grant Report — August/Summer 2022

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With special gratitude to the Nielsen family and the entire team that hold the Center for Social Change and Community Involvement together, without whom these wonderful days of exploration and fantastic learning would not have been possible.

I am too thankful to every participant, every collaborator, co-op directors that invited me to closely learn from their work, and particularly the Ordoñez, Churquina, and Chaile families, artisans of the Valley of Lerma.

BACKGROUND

More than a name

This project focuses mainly on the understanding of the *Cosmovision* (universal vision) of Andean and Northwest Argentinean culture and in parallel —the public policies that finance these practices and the struggle for a space of socioeconomic participation.

(Logotype used throughout the project representing the different colors found along the Andean mountain range.)📌



The word plateau (pronounced "plahtuh", IPA: /plæ'tou/) is of French origin and in geology means platform or flat terrain. Leaving aside the linguistic understanding, it is important to note that since ancient times for the Andean culture the *apus*, as they are also called, are venerated as divine entities that

protect the people of the mountain range. The mountains were venerated both by the Incas and by the local populations incorporated into their empire, constituting deities related to fertility cults and honored to ensure the water supply.

The Andean Cosmovision can be defined as the idea and appreciation of the world of the people, behind which they contemplate and reveal their natural and cultural environment, it is the product of a process of evolution of thought. From this exploration and understanding, it was planned to discern elements of the artisanal / hand-cured work of the Altiplano region;

- Respect for the dignity of the person.
- Solidarity, honesty and truthfulness.

The ancestral Andean culture assumes and promotes fundamental values of their philosophy: Yachay (wisdom), Llank'ay (work), Munay (will), Ayni (solidarity and reciprocity).



Throughout preliminary draftings and execution of every task of action, it was imperative to respect the above mentioned premises as well as the following pillars of development for the project:

- *Promote public policies for the handicraft sector that address the creative subject, placing the artisan, the artist, the knowledge, their community and their art in a scenario of deserved socioeconomic vindication.*
- *Promote greater understanding of artisan production processes, hand-cured products among the general public.*
- *Promote collaboration agreements between the handicraft sector and private companies.*

- *Generate spaces for the co-creation of policies of inclusion and respect for the indigenous and mestizo communities of the Northwest region.*
- *To achieve accompaniment through the strengthening of strategic alliances between the organizational and private sectors.*

Hand-Cured Artisanship

The artisan works of Argentina are very precious. Each region socioculturally speaking, has different objects of various shapes, colors, materials, and uses; each of these are built with different techniques depending on the material used and the region in which it is built. Therefore, an artisan crafts of Argentina are made by an extraordinary culture, manufactured by hand or with handmade tools, the same is based on the necessary elements to be a folkloric fact (functional, in force, anonymous, empirical, etc.)



The Northern provinces still maintain their ancestral customs that we can appreciate in their music, dance, celebrations as well as in their gastronomy and handicrafts. Therefore, an Argentinean piece of craftwork is made by an extraordinary culture, manufactured by hand or with handmade tools, the same is based on the necessary elements to be a folkloric piece (functional, current, anonymous, empirical, etc.)

The Northern provinces still maintain their ancestral customs that we can appreciate in their music, dance, celebrations as well as in their gastronomy and craftwork. Thus, alpaca wool fabrics, multicolored tapestries, ponchos, carpets, musical instruments and stone and wood carvings are some of the most popular products in the region which are found along the route.

- *In the province of Jujuy, for example, we find works in pottery, among which stand out vessels in the shape of animals and human faces. Silver works in gourds and other utensils with filigree of unique characteristics in the country. Weavings, leather objects, wood carvings and musical instruments (charangos, sampoñas and erques).*
- *In Salta the works in black pottery from the Calchaquías Valleys and red pottery from San Lorenzo. Weavings: ponchos, blankets and shawls in sheep wool, llama wool or in "lunchado" that combines both. Craftwork in antler, leather, basketry and wood carvings.*

WORKSHOPPING: FINDINGS AND RESOURCES

In a world increasingly dominated by the concentration of capital, it becomes a necessity for this sector for the state to promote policies that protect, sustain and enhance its development. The aim is to revalue, preserve, rescue and appropriate the cultural heritage represented in the crafts and the artisan tradition, incorporating design and innovation.



Artisanal ecosystems that stimulate local economies

Why Artisanal Ecosystems? Crafts in their different fields share characteristics, procedures, techniques... in the same way that living beings coexist interrelated in ecosystems. Ecosystems are dynamic spaces, the result of specific environmental (synchronic) and historical (diachronic) conditions that make them unique. In ecosystems there is a permanent evolution, as a result of the multiple interactions between the elements that compose it and with the environment. Thus, craftworks have evolved over

time in terms of their techniques, raw materials, functionality, and also moved by certain conditions external to the ecosystem. And certainly at this historical point, there is a convergence of not very encouraging diagnoses for the survival of the hand-cured craftwork. The importance of handicrafts is expressed both in economic and cultural terms. At the economic level, it implies the presence of genuine and sustainable work. In this process, craftworkers are directly linked to the raw material and generate added value, with a low-scale mode of production that does not harm the environment. At the cultural level, craftwork operates as a pulley that transmits the identity and memory of the people, a tool that connects the past with the present, linking tradition, the symbolic and the utilitarian.





Methods and limitations

The methodology of work that was implemented throughout the project consisted of three parts: the first part was based on the available resources and the confirmation of strategic alliances with the public, private and social sectors. The fundamental idea of this part of the project has to do with the understanding that society's actors work together for the improvement and elaboration of inclusive public policies and that at some point they can be autonomous. We worked with a group of seven cooperatives of local artisans and artists belonging to indigenous communities of northwestern Argentina as well as local representatives of the municipal government of the different cities where the workshopping sessions took place.



The present project focuses on the development and integration of productive capacities of the traditional craftwork sector, based on the resignification of practices, co-design, communication and commercialization. This project seeks the consolidation and growth of the

traditional handicrafts sector in Northern Argentina by identifying its qualities, values, stories, tales, etc. linked to the cultural and natural heritage of the territory.

- *The workshop sessions were focused during different weeks on topics concerning the commercialization processes of handicraft work. In the company of lawyers, activists and community representatives of the Regional Center of Artisans of the Province of Salta and Jujuy.*
- *A survey was launched in may to understand the interests of prospect participants and to engage within the dynamic of constant feedback throughout the several weeks of the project.*
- *During the weeks 1, 6, 8, and 9. Workshops were at the Centro de Artesanos for a total length of 3 days each week*

Timeline Key Weeks:	May	Thru May 31; Alliances and Networking with Partner Organizations, Project launching and promotion.				
	June	Week 1: Launching in Salta	Week 2: Workshops in Cafayate	Week 3: Workshops in San Antonio de los Cobres	Week 4: Workshops in Humahuaca	Week 5: Workshops in Tilcara
	July	Week 6: Workshops in Salta	Week 7: Round table, international forum.	Week 8: Workshops in Salta	Week 9: Workshops in Salta	
	August	Follow-up and online resource sharing.				

Until August we have been working under a workshop approach, in which team members and artisans are co-designing objects, experimenting with forms and interactions between materials in a joint way, in such a sustainable way that allows the exchange and dialogic construction of knowledge, and a continuous evaluation of the process.

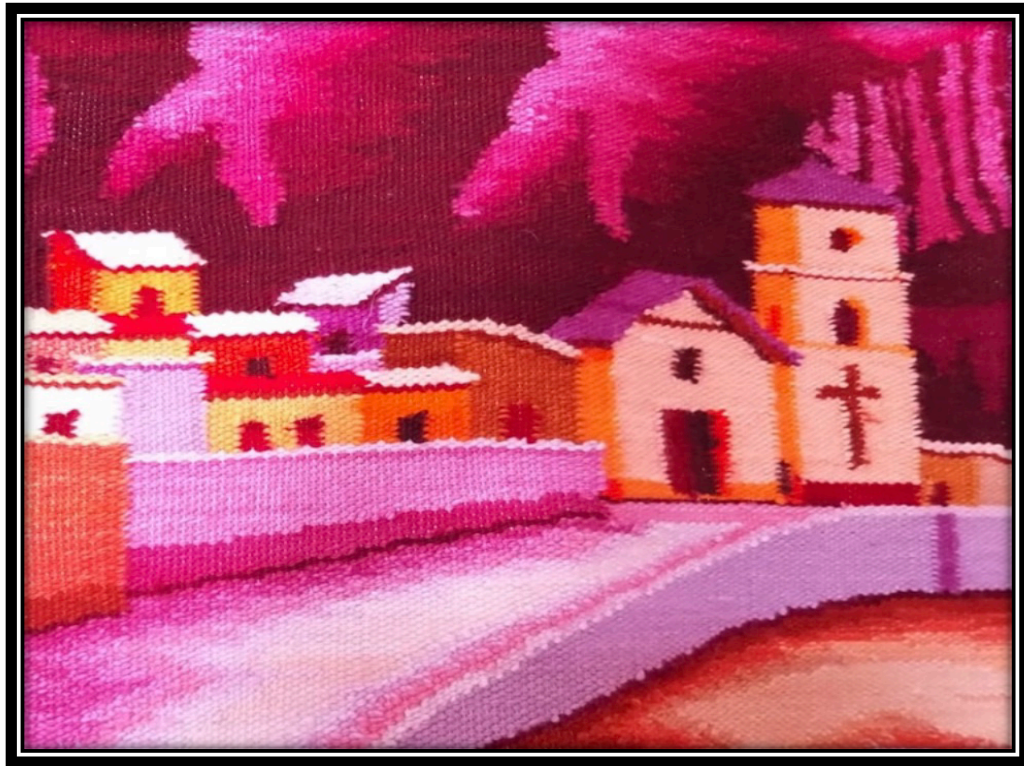
In the meetings and workshops that have been held successfully, we have worked on the production of new objects, based on quality craftwork and excellence, the establishment of a fair price, and a better presentation for commercialization (brands, labels, packaging, etc.).



On the other hand, a high level of collaboration has been achieved among the artisans, in terms of the production of the pieces for making a catalog, and other types of synergies are also taking place in terms of the exchange of knowledge on techniques, the manufacture of tools or the resolution of technical difficulties encountered in their artisan work.

Something that also marks the project was the openness and availability of the processes and results to the artisan sector. The profits from the commercialization of the objects co-designed and produced are, obviously, in the hands of the artisan who made the piece, as well as the technical

files of each of the resulting objects, from which they can continue to be produced, either by the same or other people who handle the technique, are available to the entire artisan community of the Altiplano and Northern Argentina region.



Community Building and Collective Action

In order to carry out a cultural community project in the Humahauca mountain range region, a workshop was held on community and social inclusion policies and financial opportunities for parents in the Andean region who sell craftwork as a means of income generation.

The inauguration was attended by more than twenty people, most of them living in poverty or exclusion. All of them were eager to learn about a new workshop that could provide them with tools for the future, not only to get out of their usual social circle through the friendship that is created in these spaces, but also to find new ways to enter the labor market.

How can artisanal, hand-cured works help the most disadvantaged families? We put this question to the organizer who led this workshop: "Art through craftwork is a way of expressing your feelings and sharing them with people, in a more subtle way than with words, through images, and this will help them to word what they find difficult to say, not through sounds but through images and palpable pieces". Prof. Mamani (right)



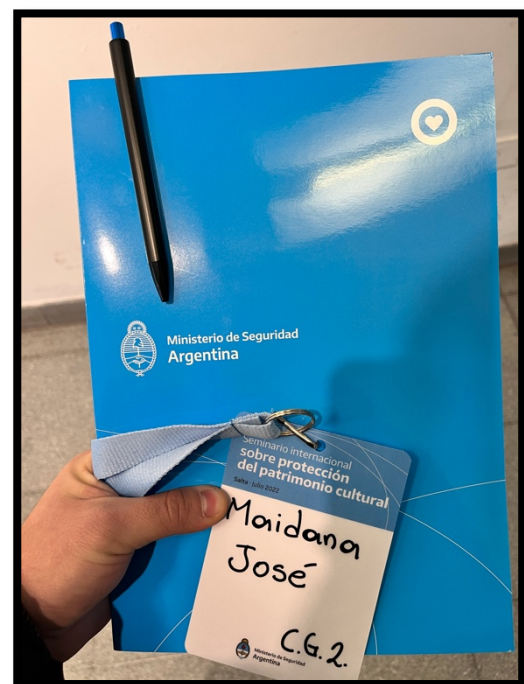
This occasion also served to make a sort of evaluation of these workshop spaces that are already being developed in the region, but this time in a particular way. This event in particular serves as a precedent in the region.

Observations

During week 7 of the project, it was previously planned to participate in a series of workshops led by the Asociacion de Artesanos de Frontera in Puerto Iguazu. Unfortunately, weather conditions affected long-distance transportation services during the previous week and subsequently several points in the city of Puerto Iguazu were impacted with damage to infrastructure due to flooding. In communication through digital media,

especialmente video calls through Zoom and WhatsApp, the Association's group provided me with relevant information about their actions in relation to the participation of artisans in the development of public and inclusionary policies.

During this week in Salta, the International Seminar on the Protection of Cultural Heritage was held in collaboration with Interpol, Unesco and other high-ranking diplomatic and cultural officials from the Southern Cone of South America. Through the work with the Salta Artisans Center I received a special invitation to participate from the Secretary of the Cultural Cabinet, being the youngest participant of the whole seminar, I had the opportunity to represent the Plateau project as an initiative to learn about the progress in terms of the valorization of artisan work. Additionally, I had the opportunity to lead a panel of questions and answers in one of the dynamics for policy drafting.



Post-Mortem and Future Plan of Action

Knowing that artisans' organizations and cooperatives play an important role in the local and regional economy as well as in the process of cultural revaluation, it is remarkable to note that their management has been characterized primarily by a certain empiricism that has generated a series of barriers that limit their protagonism in economic and social development.



Nonetheless, in each city a group of dedicated activists and policy makers remains in place who hope to judicialize and strengthen the rights of the artisan community in the Northwest. Training programs on strategic legal and financial planning are scheduled to be carried out and to encourage the participation of these economic actors so that they can efficiently use their resources.

Addenda

Budgeted final costs

Plateau PJT Budget

Budgeting	Cost in USD Detail	Price Source
Expenses		
Venues*		
Coworking Space SLA	\$530 Rental for meeting space, workshop space for 30 days	https://www.coworkingspella.com/
Coworking Space SLA	\$90 Rental for meeting space with stakeholders, community partners, and participants	https://www.coworkingspella.com/
MAC / Museo de Arte Contemporaneo	\$250 Workshop and coding in-person events in Sala 09	https://www.coworkingspella.com/
Food		
Coffee Breaks	\$2,170 Coffee Breaks for 32 sessions (workshop session, buffet style serving) Adjustment for 5 more invites to participate of the workshoping session.	http://www.biscottiherbouse.com/Menu
Refresh Materials	\$600 Assistance Food Drive and Fundraising	https://www.wm.com.ar/
	\$70 Social Insurance <*>	
Supplies and Work Materials		
Materials	\$290 Stationary supplies, art materials, binders, folders, pens, etc.	https://www.literabimex.com.ar/
Promotional material	\$375 Flyers and digital media done by Caribee School Spella.	http://www.caribeeinmediacol.com.ar/
Certificates	\$225 Certificates printing.	https://mundooficinas.com.ar/
Transportation and Lodging		
Stipend and Expenses coverage for Coordinators and instructors	\$90	
Miscellaneous	\$70	
Commuting	\$60 Commuting by public transport	https://labellapella.com.ar/
In-country Transportation	\$470 Bus from Spella to other cities. #	https://www.deltaseptel.com.ar/
Total SCI Grant Funding Approximate	\$5,000	
Total Student Own Funding Approximate	\$300 ~ approx.	
External funding	\$50	
Total Expenses Approximate	\$5,350	

*> See latest costs of a second year.

* Venues in other cities: The workshops were held in the Centro de Artesanos, Artisan's Center in the cities of Puntamarca, Ticsa, and Hunahuaca at no cost and have received snacks hot drinks for attendees.

> due to the increasing taxing and rising inflation some costs have from original budget. Regarding food, an additional group of 5 people were able to be accommodated.

initially a trip to Iquazu Falls was budgeted but since it got canceled due to force majeure events, allowed for readjustment of budget.

<*> insurance for food safety and social gathering unforeseen had to be payed.