

Weaving the Past into the Present: The Sustainability of Traditional Culture in a Modern Context

Sarah Confer – CAC Conference
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TRADITIONAL CULTURE - AN IMPORTANT ROLE



Knowledge: natural dyes

- Fundamental to human existence
- Irreplaceable source of knowledge
- Foundation of regional and individual identity
- Means of cross-cultural communication
- Cultural participation is key to creation of healthy and thriving community
- Foundation upon which a people can build their future



Identity, community and communication

WHAT DOES PRESERVATION OF A LIVING CULTURE LOOK LIKE?

“When we think of historical preservation I suppose that you think of something that is old, something that has happened in the past and that you want to put away on a shelf and bring it out and look at every now and then...I'm not really sure that that's the way we want to look at these things at all.”

(Parris Butler, quoted in Gulliford (2000):1)



- Cultures are not static, but continually evolving
- Self-determination is key to traditional culture remaining relevant in a contemporary setting
- Legislation to provide support, curb prejudice, and foster cultural pride
- Economic incentives help preserve traditional ways of life

Mayor speaking (far left) and dancers (far right) at Inca Cancha festivity (Peru 2008)



THE CENTRE FOR TRADITIONAL TEXTILES OF CUSCO (CTTC)

The CTTC was founded in 1996 by **Nilda Callañaupa** as a **Special Project of Cultural Survival**. Its mission is to aid in the revival and preservation of the Andean weaving tradition in the Cusco region. More than ten years on, it is now an independent non-profit organisation.



The CTTC works with 9 weaving communities in the Cusco province: **Chincho, Pitumarca, Chahuaytire, Accha Alta, Patabamba, Mahuaypampa, Sallac, Acopia, and Chumbivilcas.**

The weaving centre at Accha Alta (left)



Through the establishment of weaving centres in each community, educational programmes, a museum and store, the CTTC works to preserve and strengthen the traditional weaving practices in each community

The CTTC museum (far left) and store (far right)



MOSQOY – PROJECT COLIBRI

Project Colibri is a project within the non-profit organisation **Mosqoy** whose goal is to establish sustainability in the Sacred Valley region through the tradition of textiles.



Project Colibri works directly with the weavers buying textiles and wool at a fair price to sell in North America. 100% of the profits are returned to the Sacred Valley:

- 1/3 of the funds go **directly to the weaver**
- 1/3 supports Mosqoy's **Youth Bank**, helping to pay for tuition and/or housing
- 1/3 supports a specific **community revitalization project** that the weaver is part of.

Wenceslau – member of the Amaru Association of Weavers