



Q'ENTE COMMUNITY VALUES ASSESSMENT

May 29th 2012

Geneva List

Q'ente Field Fellow 2012

Preface

The following Community Values Assessment was conducted on behalf of the Q'ente Textile Revitalization Society by the Spring 2012 Q'ente Field Fellow Geneva List. Additional support and translations were provided by Elizabeth Jaimes Canal, Elvira Huaman Guerra, and Adrian Jimenez Suma. The Q'ente Textile Revitalization Society (herein Q'ente) is a not-for-profit socio-economic development organization that works with traditional Quechua weavers in the southern Peruvian Andes. Q'ente is a community-based organization that builds capacity and funds community projects via fair-trade textile sales in the international market. The following report was conducted in order to provide Q'ente with an updated awareness of their partner communities' values, needs, and perceptions. Due to the nature of the evaluation, additional dissemination or reproduction of this document must first obtain approval from the Q'ente Society.

Summary of Responses

The following Q'ente Community Values Assessment comprises: knowledge of Q'ente's goals, the textile tradition, community values, and relations with Q'ente. Of Q'ente's nine weaving communities, Pitukiska, Bombom, Parobamba, and Amaru participated in a complete evaluation while Cancha Cancha, Q'enqo, and Pachar participated in a partial evaluation that only discussed relations with Q'ente. Huaran and Calca were unable to participate.

Q'ente Goals

The majority of Q'ente's community associations are not aware of, or able to articulate, Q'ente's goals, values, or reason for founding. Beyond the basic function of buying textiles, many communities did not know that Q'ente aims to revitalize the textile tradition and renew pride and respect of the Quechua culture. Two communities spoke to Q'ente's help with community projects but made no mention Q'ente's goals of strengthening networking capacity or for stabilizing the economies of these highland communities. This suggests that Q'ente needs to vocalize and articulate its values and goals in a manner that the communities can comprehend and internalize.

Textile Tradition

The primary response regarding the importance of preserving the textile tradition was that it allows for the weaver to pay for the food and education for their children. This suggests the importance of financial autonomy for the female weavers and the valuable ends that textile purchases provide. They also emphasized the importance of preserving the plants used for dye. Although it was harder for the four communities to articulate, every weaver voiced that the textile tradition is a custom, passed on from generations, and for this reason alone it is worth preserving. The responses suggested that the tradition provides them with a connection to their culture and their past. When questioning if there are aspects of the textile traditional that could be changed or adapted, respondents suggested that they desired to improve the quality of the textiles and to learn new designs, animals, acabado finishing, how to work with different dyes, and how to spin and work with finer wool. They did not voice the desire to change the manner in which textiles are created.

Community Values

Every community stated that the textile tradition was important to them, and that it was one of the main things they liked about their community. The second more frequent response was that the cleanliness of the community was important to them. The changes that communities would like to see and visions of their ideal community include the desire for access to higher education, including more professional careers within the community. They would also like to see more textile sales and home improvements, such as painting, cementing, and murals. Other community improvements and visions included sowing more plants and vegetables for consumption, establishing more community associations, attracting a greater number of tourists, and having potable water and less garbage in their environment. The community's perception of positive changes that have already occurred in the communities include an increase of educational opportunities for the youth, the creation of weaving associations, the

construction of local spaces (churches, weaving centres etc.), and improved housing and transportation networks. When asked what changes in the community would make them sad, across all communities, they overwhelmingly responded that the disappearance of the textile tradition would make them sad.

Changes that have already occurred and have created sadness in the communities predominantly focused on environmental degradation. These concerns include an increase of plastics without the availability of recycling, pollution in the rivers and freshwater sources that these communities depend on for drinking water, and the depletion of well water. Of great intrigue, two communities in distinctly separate mountain ranges mentioned that the climate was changing. They responded with identical observations, noting that there was more rain for a longer period extending past the typical boundaries of the rainy season. They observed that the additional rain was causing seeds to rot and the crops to fail. The two communities also noticed that their sheep and chickens have new diseases and are dying more frequently. Both communities believe that the sun had become stronger.

Relations with Q'ente

Regarding the relationship with Q'ente, overall the communities are happy and many expressed deep gratitude for Q'ente presence and support. They all enjoy the monthly visits because they are happy to have constant communication with Q'ente and it has encouraged greater organization within the associations. There was a pervasive concern, although not shared by every community, that Q'ente needs to buy more textiles. They voiced discontent that the purchasing is so inconsistent that it is difficult for the weavers to get by. Many communities would like greater guidance on what sells best, including which colours, designs, and products. Some suggested the need for a capacity workshop. Most communities also voiced that Q'ente should look for a store to sell textiles either in Peru or Canada. However, it was made clear that their only concern was that the store is located in an area of high sale volume.

Overall, the Q'ente Community Values Assessment reaffirmed the importance of the textile tradition and need for Q'ente's involvement with textile sales. This assessment underscores the importance of a clean environment in these communities and the threats that are presented by pollution and climate change. This assessment suggests that, in addition to textile sales, it would be valuable for Q'ente to direct efforts towards sustainable development and environmental management, household improvement, capacity development, and to continue providing access to higher education by supporting Mosqoy: Sacred Valley Youth Fund.

Pitukiska

Q'ente Goals

At first Pitukiska seemed very shy, they did not want to speak and they seemed uncomfortable. They were not aware of Q'ente's goals and did not know why Q'ente was founded.

Textile Tradition

Pitukiska wants to preserve the textile tradition because it is the only (paid) work that the females in the community know how to do. They use the money gained from textile sales to provide for their children's food and education. They want to preserve the tradition because they learned it as children; it's their custom. They felt that it is most important to preserve the plants and the animals used for textiles, they want to maintain those aspects to teach to their children. They felt that the textile tradition could benefit from adaptations such as working with thinner wool, or other changes to make the textiles more beautiful.

Community Values

Their textiles are important and valued in Pitukiska. They also like the plant Raqui Raqui, which is used for tinting the textile fibres. They said they would be sad to see the textiles or Q'ente disappear from their community. However, they would be happy to see more of their textiles being sold. They would like to have access to capacity building classes such as tinting (particularly cochineal), as well as sewing and cooking. Pitukiska also wants cleaner houses, more plants and trees in their environment, and more associations (such as the weaving association). In ten years their ideal community would have better education for the youth; they hope that their children will lead better lives than they have. They envisioned better textiles, greater community organization, and cleaner homes. They have already seen positive changes in the community, including more education, associations, and the construction of the local church. They note that in the past there was little education, no associations, and there was a culture of 'borrachera' (drunkenness), but now they proudly go to church every Sunday. Pitukiska has witnessed negative changes as well. They are sad about the increased amount of plastics and garbage in the community, which they do not have the capacity to recycle, and that the river water is becoming polluted.

Relationship with Q'ente

Pitukiska feels that the relationship with Q'ente is good, and very important. However, they feel that Q'ente needs to purchase more textiles, as the purchases are too on/off. They like the amount of communication with Q'ente but they would want Q'ente to communicate more effectively about what is selling best. They have no other concern with Q'ente but suggest that Q'ente should search for a location to sell the textiles and also try to advance on exporting more.

Bombón

Q'ente Goals

Bombón suggested that Q'ente's goals were to buy textiles and help with local projects. They were not able to articulate why Q'ente was founded.

Textile Tradition

Bombón wants to preserve the textile tradition in order to preserve the plants used for dying, so that the plants will not be forgotten or become extinct. The most important aspects of the textile tradition to preserve are the animal designs, as they have been passed down from generations and it provides the community with connection to their ancestors. They would like to adapt their textiles by perfecting the acabado finishing and by learning other designs.

Community Values

The textiles and the clean community are important to Bombón. They were not able to articulate what changes would make them sad. They would be happy to see more plants and vegetables grown in their community to supplement their diets. In ten years, their ideal community would have more education for the youth, better homes, which include new paint and murals, but would retain organic farming. They joked, that they each want to have their own car! A negative change that has occurred in their community was the depletion of their local well water. Although it is not clear exactly what occurred, they now have water provisioning from local institutions such as the school. Without this they would need to travel a long way for fresh water. They are also sad that strong winds during February and March have blown down some houses. However, they are happy that the carretera has been built, as before they had to travel by foot everywhere. Bombón also said that they would be proud of the locale once it is built.

Relationship with Q'ente

Overall, Bombón is happy with their relationship with Q'ente and believes that Q'ente is helping to advance the organization's goals. Many agreed that they are happy with the monthly visits but it was overheard that a group of women remarked, "at least you bring bread". This suggests that there is discontent with the lacking or inconsistent textiles sales. They said that they are sad when Q'ente doesn't come to the community for long periods of time or when Q'ente doesn't buy textiles. They would like that Q'ente sell more textiles and they suggested that Q'ente look for other locations to sell, in Peru and in Canada.

Parobamba

Q'ente Goals

Parobamba is not aware of Q'ente's goals or the reason it was founded.

Textiles

It was difficult for the women to articulate why they wanted to preserve the textile tradition but they offered because they need to feed their children, and they need money from textile sales. To Parobamba, the most important aspect of the textile tradition to preserve are the native plants used for dye. There was not a clear response as to whether any aspects of the tradition could be adapted but they seemed to say that they already augment their textiles with many new aspects. This requires additional clarification.

Community Values

Parobamba likes the *artesanía* in their community as well as the different community organizations, such as their weaving organization. They would be sad to see their textiles disappear but on the other hand, they would be happy to see more textile sales. They would also like to have a greater amount of higher education in Parobamba, including more professionals. In ten years, their ideal community would have improved houses (new paint, cemented floors), a better road, and one suggested that they would want to see a hospital in the community. They joked that they would want more money to eat better and they also joked that they would like to have light again, as during the time of the assessment the electricity had been out for two weeks. Sadly, Parobamba had noticed climatic changes in their community that was negatively impacting their agriculture. They mentioned that there is more rain, even in April, which is usually the start of the dry season. This excessive rain caused the crops to rot thereby reducing production. They have also noticed more intense wind and hail, which is also killing plants. In addition, the animals have new diseases and chickens are dying, they suspect that this is a result of climate change. Lastly, they said that there is more sun or that it seems stronger. Yet on a positive note, Parobamba is proud that there are more textiles of greater quality in the community.

Relationship with Q'ente

Parobamba believes that the relationship with Q'ente is very good and that they are more organized because of Q'ente monthly visits. They also just like Q'ente's monthly updates. They feel that Q'ente is advancing many goals of the organization, and that each month is better especially with regards to the association's registration. They mentioned that they are concerned that it is so difficult for Q'ente volunteers to come to Parobamba, and they are sorry that there is not greater transportation to access the Valley. They did not have many suggestions of how Q'ente could better serve their needs but they felt that Q'ente could find a store to sell textiles in a location where there are more sales.

Amaru

Q'ente Goals

Amaru was the only community that was aware of Q'ente's goals. However, Gregorio led the discussion in Quechua and the remaining weavers simply nodded their heads, so it was not clear what was discussed. At this moment a translation was not provided. The impact assessment was conducted directly after the Encuentro where Q'ente representatives discussed the goals with all communities. Therefore, it is possible that Q'ente's goals were simply fresh in their minds.

Textiles

The weavers want to preserve the textile tradition because they learned it from their grandmothers and they do not want to lose that knowledge. Importantly, it is a tradition and a custom, and they noted that the women work diligently to maintain that custom. It is most important to them that they preserve the plants they cultivate for dye. Regarding adaptation, they feel that they have already adapted animals and designs but it is important for them to know what the tourists like including colours, items, and designs.

Community Values

The textiles, the cleanliness, and the improved houses in Amaru are important to the community. They also like the animals, trees, and land. They said that they would be sad to see their customs, textiles, or water disappear, but that they would be happy to have potable water, attract more tourists, and eliminate the garbage. In ten years, Amaru would see their ideal community with many houses that are improved naturally (I assume this means with traditional adobe and wood structures, but still not industrial era renovations). They envision superior education and professionals in the community. As well, they would like to grow fewer beans. They have noticed changes in the climate that have saddened the community. For instance there is more rain and their fields are worse because of it; production is lower. They note that there is much more sun and that their animals have greater disease.¹ However, they feel that Q'ente has been a positive change in the community and that the renovated houses, including the separation of cuys from living spaces, have been positive as well.

Relationship with Q'ente

Amaru is very happy with their relationship with Q'ente and feel that Q'ente is helping to advance the goals of the organization. They appreciate the new monthly visits as they find that more contact with Q'ente helps them to organize themselves better. They are concerned that there are fewer orders. At one point it was mentioned that they did not like being promised an order without it materialising. They suggested that Q'ente work towards better organization in the other communities in order to have better textiles (this will need to be clarified as I cannot elaborate on the rationale behind this). As well, they said that they would appreciate the money for orders up front to give the community more confidence that the order will follow through.

¹ This is particularly fascinating given that Parobamba gave an identical response.

Q'enqo

Relationship with Q'ente

Q'enqo is happy with Q'ente, they like the volunteers and feel that they are in a trusting relationship. They are very happy for Q'ente's support and appreciate the monthly meetings. As well, they are very grateful for the library. However, they would hope that Q'ente address some of their additional goals. For instance, they would like their homes to be improved, and they would like it if Q'ente could help promote turismo vivencial, including overnight stays. They also asked for food or nutrition from Q'ente for their children (this would require clarification). Importantly, Q'enqo hopes to have more textile orders from Q'ente in order to make money to pay for their families. Q'enqo stated that ideally Q'ente would have a textile order every month or two.

Pachar

Relationship with Q'ente

Each member in the Pachar weaving association is grateful to work with Q'ente and happy with the support offered, especially regarding the registration process. They like the monthly meetings because they appreciate greater communication with Q'ente Canada. They mentioned though, that due to a lack of communication in the past with Q'ente, some partners in the association chose to retire. Overall, Pachar wishes that Q'ente could provide more help with selling the dolls in Peru, such as by supporting them in searching out new markets. Also they would like more orders from Q'ente in order to help them support their families.

Cancha Cancha

Relationship with Q'ente

Cancha Cancha felt that there was a lack of communication with Q'ente, not due to the monthly community visits but rather, because information is hard to relay to Cancha Cancha. They noted that they are only working with Q'ente and because of this they wish Q'ente could buy and sell more textiles. They mentioned that when Q'ente only buys one textile every few months, it becomes difficult for them. Cancha Cancha would like to be trained in new colours and designs via capacity building workshops. They are eager to improve the quality of their textiles in order to sell more. They also feel that it would be better if Q'ente had a place in Peru to sell textiles permanently.

Appendix I

Complete Evaluation: Interview Questions

Q'ente's Goals

1. What are Q'ente's goals?
2. Why was it founded?

Community Values

1. What is important in your community? What do you like about your community?
2. What would you be sad to see disappear or change?
3. What changes would you be happy to see in your community?
4. In 10 years, what would your ideal community look like? (Regarding land, food, houses, social interactions, education, traditions, how they spend their time...)
5. What has already changed in your community that you are sad about?
6. What are some positive changes that you are proud of in your community?
7. To be asked on an individual basis: As a Quechua person, what do you define as being a responsible community member? How would you define a "good" person? How would you define a "bad" person? (*not asked*)

Textile Tradition

1. Why do you want to preserve the textile tradition?
2. What aspects of the tradition are the most important aspects to preserve?
3. Are there any aspects of the tradition that you think could be changed or adapted?

Relationship with Q'ente

1. How would you describe your relationship with Q'ente?
2. Is Q'ente advancing the goals of your organizations?
3. Is there sufficient communication with Q'ente?
4. Do you have concerns with Q'ente?
5. How could Q'ente be better to help you with your needs?
6. Do you want to change anything with Q'ente?