

Arpillera Sewing Project

Anglican Diocese of Peru

Peru has long been famous for its textiles. In fact, textiles dating back 6,000 years have been discovered - the fabric intact and their brilliant colours undiminished, preserved from deterioration by the dry desert air. Arpilleras are a very common cultural form of decoration in Peruvian households. These wall hangings tell the story of the region where the artists are from, describing the local life of the community. Typical scenes include a wedding, the marketplace, workers in the fields, even their livestock. In English terms, Arpilleras are embroidered collages, or 3-dimensional quilts.



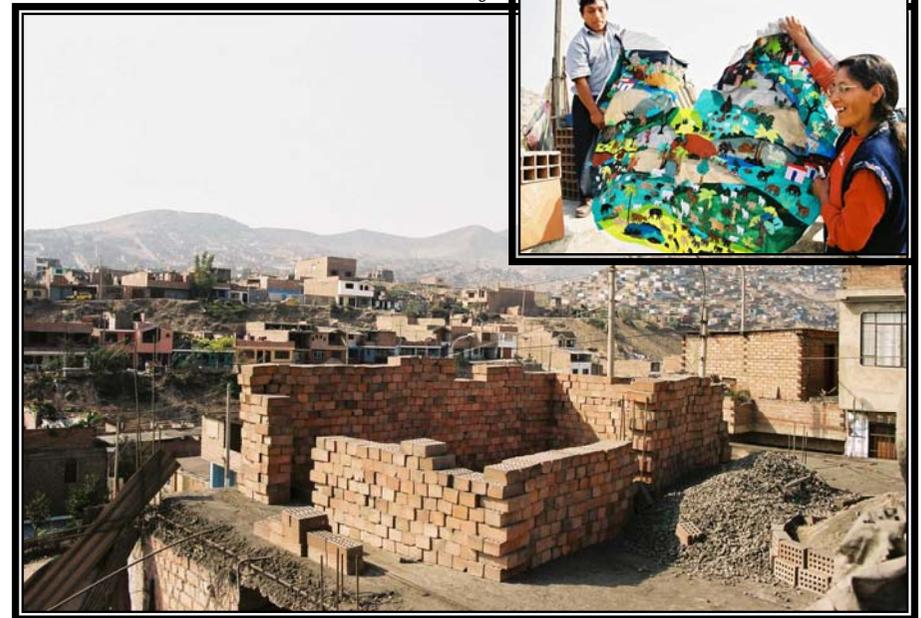
The Arpillera Sewing Project consists of groups of women in the pueblos jóvenes and invasiones, located in the desert hills on the outskirts of Lima, who gather together weekly to work on sewing projects and improve their sewing skills. 75% of heads of households are underemployed; the majority making a living from informal trades in construction work as masons or assistants. Their average monthly income range is less than the equivalent of \$150 (£100) /month. The material that the women use is off-cuts purchased from shops and factories by weight. After purchasing a bundle, they sort it and decide how they can best use the fabric. They meet together on a weekly basis, then continue working at home. The women have become good friends and discuss their problems and pray together at the weekly meetings. The Arpilleras they create, depict scenes of both country life and city life in Perú, and also biblical events, such as Noah's Ark or Jesus' birth and the visit of the 3 Wisemen. The work is very detail-oriented and requires advanced skills. A member of the English-speaking congregation from the Episcopal Diocese of Peru Jean Samaniego, leads this group of women. Products include Christmas Trees, pillow covers, wall hangings, oven mitts, teacosies, toilet roll covers and Bible covers.

The revenue generated from the sale of these products help reinforce the women's family budget. Without support, many needs would not be met including their children's education. The project is specifically for making articles to be sold in the United States and the United Kingdom. The money raised through the sale of Arpillera articles goes directly back to the ladies who sew the articles. They are required to use the money for the betterment of themselves and their household. For example, the income may be used to take a class in sewing, or build an extra room onto their house in order to host an Arpillera group, or send their child to a better school or to be educated in a trade. Any profit made on the UK sales, together with donations in lieu of speaker fees goes to the project in Lima for our Church to use to further help these poor families. Items currently brought across to the UK include Christmas Trees – embroidered collages in the shape of Christmas Trees and with subject matter surrounding the Nativity – cushion covers (Noah's Ark, Market Scenes) spectacular stoles for priests, spectacle case, purses, Christmas stars and stockings, tea and cafetiere cosies, oven mitts

Financial and material support for this project will help to continue to provide resources, training and income to people in one of Lima's poorest areas.

For information on how to buy Arpillera articles, contact Chris or Nick Roberts 2 Upland Rise, Walton, Chesterfield, Derbyshire, S40 2DD Tel 01246 233590 e-mail nick.roberts@bcs.org website: <http://www.arpillera.org.uk>

This picture is from the roof of the home where one of the Arpillera groups meet and in the inset are the home's owners. The husband was out of work, so turned his hand to sewing



too, but works away from the ladies – preferring to work outside, here shown displaying a large surround for the base of a Christmas Tree. Our other photographs show some of the detail of the work., and, of course, the ladies.



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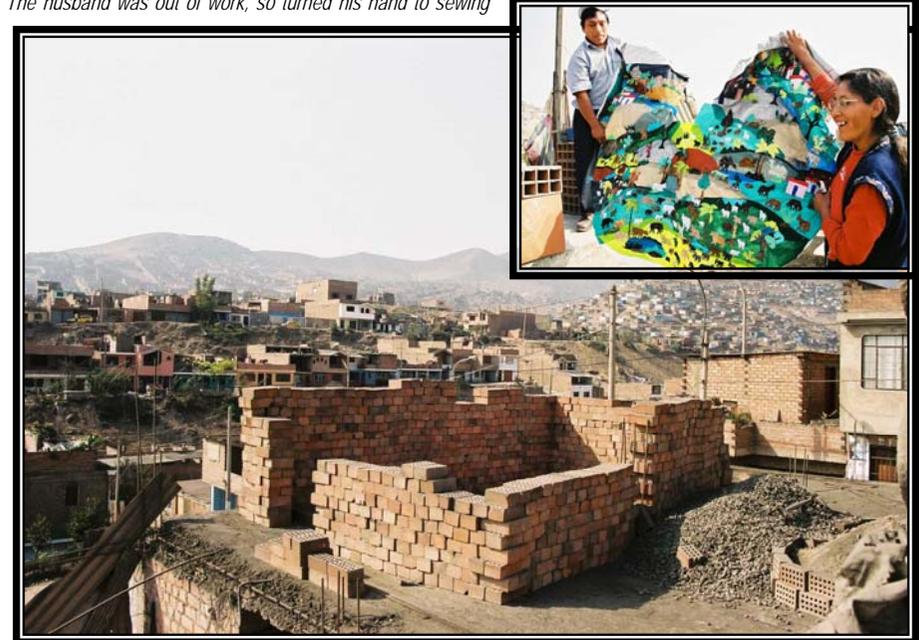


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