

Awamaki is a small community-development NGO based in a rural Peruvian town called Ollantaytambo with programs in Health, Education, Cultural Preservation and Sustainable Tourism. Ollantaytambo and the highland communities of the Sacred Valley are in urgent need of community programs to address the widespread lack of public health education, language and computer training as well as equitable work opportunities. The rise of tourism has brought significant development to the area but has also given rise to an array of social problems, such as the loss of local culture and household gender disparities. We hope to address these issues through sustainable tourism initiatives, community education services and by promoting women in all of our programs.



Though only two years old, Awamaki has had great results thus far with its projects and is in a state of expansion across the board. We are currently looking for sponsors to support our programs so that we may better meet the needs of the rural population we work with. Our Health program is in particular need of fundraising, as we are in the process of developing an Education Centre in the local clinic to address the frightening lack of health education in the Sacred Valley.

Neither the local schools nor the clinic currently have health education programs and the resulting lack of knowledge regarding basic health principles manifests in several ways. Despite the national provision of contraceptives, teen pregnancy remains extremely prevalent both in Ollantaytambo and in the highland communities due to a lack of open communication and formal sexual education. Malnutrition and child death plague the countryside, as young mothers often aren't aware of what a balanced diet is. Many women suffer from domestic abuse simply because they have watched generations of women before them silently endure the same treatment, and don't know that they have a right to live without violence. Local health notions include an addictive insistence on the use of antibiotics to cure any ailment, resulting in gross over-prescription which could lead to the outbreak of antibiotic-resistant bacteria. It has become clear to us that the future of Awamaki Health lies significantly in developing a comprehensive health education program in response to these issues.



The first step is opening an Education Centre in the local clinic where we can hold workshops and counselling on a number of health topics. The Centre will be staffed by Awamaki volunteers, local clinicians collaborating with our program, and a psychologist hired

by Awamaki to address sensitive topics such as alcoholism and domestic abuse. The centre will offer educational support in the form of posters, pamphlets, health manuals, youth and adult classes and one-on-one counselling to address a number of themes including family planning, sexual health, adolescent development, new-mother information, nutrition and food sanitation, basic health and illness, alcoholism, violence against women and personal hygiene. Once the centre is established, it will also serve as a home-base for education campaigns to the highland communities.

So far, we have outfitted the Education Centre with furniture and have begun to give nutrition workshops for young mothers. We are building a base of educational resources including textbooks, manuals and posters which cover a wide array of health topics, and hope to have the room fully equipped with education materials in the near future.



Liliana Peña, a trained Peruvian psychologist, will be directing the mental health initiatives of the room including one-on-one counselling and workshops. Mental health services are currently unavailable in Ollantaytambo; nevertheless, they are of central importance given the many family, relationship and parental issues commonly experienced in this region. We feel that hiring qualified Peruvian educators will be the best way to address the problems of *Ollantinos*, since staff should have appropriate language skills (fluency in Spanish and Quechua) and be accustomed to local culture. This will, however, constitute one of the more costly elements of the room as we hope to pay our local collaborators decent salaries.

For all of the above reasons, this project is heavily in need of fundraising support in the form of long-term sponsorship, event fundraisers or even a one-time donation. We would also warmly appreciate the donation of basic medical supplies, vitamins, educational materials, baby and toddler clothing, and diapers. Awamaki is looking to establish close partnerships with sponsors, and would like to collaborate on fundraising initiatives every step of the way. We would also welcome an opportunity to share with global youth some of the realities of rural life in Peru, in order to offer a tangible and compelling message of awareness. Please contact us at health@awamaki.org if your institution would be interested in sponsoring the project outlined above or any other of Awamaki's programs. Even a small donation goes a long way in the Sacred Valley and we would hugely appreciate your support in any form.

Sincerely,

Chantalle Brace
Health Coordinator
Awamaki U.S.