Project Chacarita
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Executive Summary

During the week of March 21-28, 2010, a group of eight Northwestern students successfully built a community center cum school in the District of Sunampe, Province of Chincha, Department of Ica. This school is being used for a nursery program during the day and then converts to a community center in the late afternoons and nights. The center will house and train over 100 women to produce Peruvian handicrafts and gifts for sale. Called Chacharita, we hope this center will be a nexus of life in the community and help sustain local businesses and intergenerational relationships across the province.
Acknowledgements
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Northwestern Institute for Sustainable Practices (NiSP)

Northwestern University Spanish Language Department

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Introduction to ISA at Northwestern

The International Students Association is a student organization whose vision is to promote interaction among students from different cultural and religious backgrounds, serving as a platform for the international student community at Northwestern to voice their opinions and concerns and encourage campus-wide dialogue on global issues and cultural diversity.

ISA’s Philanthropy activities were found this academic year and it was here that the Project Chincha was founded.
Introduction to The Eight

Upon the founding of this project initiative under ISA’s Philanthropy Committee, eight students were interviewed and selected to join Project Sunampe-Chincha, in Perú. Students from seven different nationalities became ambassadors of their own countries and took the lead in the organization and execution of the building of a community center in the city of Chincha.

Alexis Tubb (Australia): Philanthropy Project Chair
Felix Arenas (Perú): Northwestern-Peru liaison
Sebastián Gálvez (Perú): Project Planning Vision Team Chair
Meixi Ng (Singapore): Communications Chair
SungHuan Park (South Korea): Construction Planning
Yalin Buyukdora (Turkey): Visual Design Chair
Bruna Giberti (Brasil): Co-Chair On-campus fundraising
Raphaëlle Neyton (France): Co-Chair On-campus fundraising

** We are also accompanied by Emma Lawson and Andrea Fernandez, who were both in Perú.
Project Chincha

Background

On 15th August 2007, an earthquake of 7.9 on the Richter scale and with epicenter 40km to the west of Chincha Alta - Ica, Peru and killed 1,500 Peruvians, injured 2,291 people, completely destroyed 76,000 homes and affected 431,000 citizens. Markham College and its Professor Harry Hildebrand started an emergency aid response project that assembled survival packs (thanks to donations made by parents, and students) that would sustain a family for a week. Their aid plan consisted of an emergency phase focused on survival needs as well as immediate reconstruction needs in educational vicinities. Almost immediately the decision was also made to reconstruct School 22266 in the region of Sunampe. After the initial response, 6 provisional classrooms were built for the School 22266. The classrooms consisted of wooden panels which were made in Markham College, by students, and then transported to the site to be assembled. Today, the total number of temporary classrooms built in this project is 23, allowing 1200 students to continue their studies in the year 2008, and another 800 in 2009 while classrooms are rebuilt. The idea was to look for a way to encourage more long term development. This is how the Community Center project was born, based on the design concept of the temporary classrooms, but with more resilient materials.
**Vision**

Our vision for the center: To construct a Community Centers in Sunampe, Chincha in order to improve the quality of life of locals, and to strengthen ties within the respective communities.

- Improve the communities’ capacity to organize themselves
- Provide the communities with a source of sustainable development, and encourage the unity of the community.
- Provide a location for emergency support and public information.
- Create green areas, and at the same time provide the communities with a productive activity that may be run by minors (planting of native trees, gardens and orchards). This part of project to be developed by the NGO ANIA [www.mundodeanias.org](http://www.mundodeanias.org)
- Bring together Northwestern students of several different geographical and cultural regions and community members of a small Peruvian town in an act of positive cultural exchange.
The Chacaritan Community

By March 2010, 30 Community Centers were built throughout Chincha. However, no progress was made in the region of Chacarita, where no aid had been received. As a result, we chose to build Chacarita's first Community Center.

Thus, we were especially excited and honored to construct Chacarita's first redevelopment project. Today, 30 Community Centers have been built in the region of Sunampe and we are proud to have built Chincha's 31st one.

Population Statistics

- Place: District de Sunampe, Province of Chincha, Department of Ica
- Inhabitants: 45,000 approximately
- Child death rate (per thousand): 5.3
- Life expectancy upon birth: 75.3 years for women, 70.3 years for men.
- Services (water and electricity): Exist but are generally unreliable.
- Education: Students that finish primary school: 82.4%
- Students in the second grade of secondary with sufficient performance in communication: 20.3%
The Chacarita Center

The project consisted on the construction of a multi use central room, kitchen, common playroom for children and covered patio. The main objective was to improve the quality of life of local residents, to strengthen ties within the respective communities, provide a location for emergency support and public information. We were successful in completing the construction of a center with two primary functions: to serve as a nursery school in the mornings for 50 children between 2 and 4 years old, and as a workshop to promote sustainable activities like cooking and sewing for adults.

The community center is socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable. The beneficiaries of this project are between 500 to 1000 people in the communities Chacarita and Huaca Grande in the District of Sunampe, Province of Chincha, and Department of Ica.
**Work Stages: March 21-28, 2010**

**Stage 1: Flattening of the Terrain and Pouring of Concrete**

Stage 1 was performed by community members in the morning of Sunday 21st March. Once they flattened the terrain, they marked the contours of the slab, mixed the concrete and poured it in the terrain. The Eight arrived at midday and met Marcelo Rochabrun and Sebastian Polis, Markham College students who had previously lead this type of project and explained Northwestern students the basic steps to make a typical panel.

**Stage 2: Cutting of Timber and Structural Design**

On Monday 22nd March, 110 timber rods were cut into different lengths using an electric saw. Then, they were nailed in 4 different types of frames, depending on their functions: arches (structural purpose), window panels, door panels and closed panels. Following this, they were covered with varnish to protect the wood.
Stage 3: Making of Panels

On Tuesday 23rd March, 22 panels were made by nailing the prefabricated concrete panels into the wooden frames. Half of the group was in charge of making door and window holes using a saw (with the help of a carpenter), while the rest worked on making the window covers.

Stage 4: Assembling of Panels, Placing of Roof, Placing of Window Covers, and Painting.

Wednesday 24th March was the fourth and last day of work. A group of 10 students from Markham College, led by Prof. Harry Hildebrand, arrived at Chacarita and helped us assemble the panels into the basic unit center shown. Meanwhile, some of us placed the roof, while the rest worked on placing the window covers. The final part of the project involved painting the mural with the help of children from the community, where the group managed to bond with the local community.
Your Contribution