

ETC 2007 Responsible Tourism Showcase and Honoree

The Educational Travel Community has developed a stewardship recognition program for responsible tourism initiatives. Now in its fifth year, the program is called the Responsible Tourism Showcase and it is featured in conjunction with the annual Educational Travel Conference. A maximum of two exemplary field practices/programs in responsible tourism are selected as Showcase honorees each year. These honorees submit a showcase application demonstrating the merit of their responsible travel activities, from travel philanthropy to responsible environmental practices. A financial contribution of \$1000.00 funded from the proceeds of the annual ETC silent charity auction is given to the honorees' specific field projects.

ETC 2007 Responsible Tourism Showcase Honoree

Program/Project - Culture Xplorers Weavers Awards

Honoree Application and Program Summary

The *CX Weavers Awards* is an annual celebration to honor the indigenous weavers who excel at the complex, beautiful and endangered Peruvian textile tradition which dates back 2,000 years.

More than 500 weavers in eight communities across the Sacred Valley of Peru participate in this annual competition to test their skills, learn from each other, celebrate together and be recognized with cash and prizes for their ancient art.

In addition to sharing thousands of dollars in prize money (\$2,000 total in 2006), dozens of winning weavers come to Chinchero each July where they represent their communities, receive medals, certificates of achievement and spend the day with fellow honorees from across the Sacred Valley and the international travelers who have come to honor them.

On a macro level, the *CX Weavers Awards* has become a model for reciprocal, positive, sustainable partnerships between travelers and indigenous artisans around the globe.

Benefits for the Local Communities

Benefits for the local communities can be seen on at least two levels: direct economic benefits and the increased self-esteem and well merited pride that comes hand-in-hand with the recognition dozens of winning weavers receive at the annual awards.

Direct Economic Benefit

Not only did the 2nd annual *CX Weavers Awards* contribute \$2,000 in prize money to dozens of winning weavers from eight communities; in addition, our handful of travelers, armed with a newfound appreciation of the weavers' skills and background, spent over \$3,000 buying textiles directly from participating artists. This combination creates a significant financial incentive for participating textile artists and their communities.

Pride and the Revival of an Ancient Tradition

Beyond the thousands of additional dollars entering the participating communities as a direct result of the *CX Weavers Awards*, there is an infusion of pride and increased self-esteem for the weavers, thanks to the recognition they receive from their community members, fellow weavers from across the Sacred Valley and the international travelers who have come specifically to honor them and their ancient craft.

This pride, combined with the real economic incentives the awards offer, has acted as an important catalyst in the recent revival of the endangered Peruvian textile tradition. It should be noted that these awards, started 3 years ago, act as a creative support to the tireless, 20 year crusade that Nilda Callañaupa has led to help recover these ancient traditions.

The ultimate proof that the CX Weavers Awards are having a growing and positive impact on participating communities is the overwhelming support of the communities themselves for our program. The mayors of each community clamor for the continuation of this close partnership. At the same time, more and more of the 500+ eligible weavers express their desire to take part in future CX Weavers Awards competitions.

Please view the following short documentary film made in Peru during the 2nd Annual CX Weavers Awards. It focuses on the growing impact of these awards:
www.culturexplorers.com/Pages/Destinations/Peru/Peru_WeaversAwards.html

Best Practices in Cultural Conservation and Travel

Human culture is dying off at an alarming rate. As a grim yardstick, Wade Davis, the renowned anthropologist and National Geographic Explorer in Residence, notes that 50% of the world's 5,000+ languages will fade from existence in the next 20 years. The CX Weavers Awards is an example of how with creativity, trust and long-term relationships, local communities, tour operators, educational travelers, NGO's and local practitioners of ancient, living culture can work together to stem this dramatic decrease of the earth's cultural diversity.

What makes the CX Weavers Awards model so exciting is that it offers an alternative to the one-sided donor/recipient relationship still seen throughout the world, replacing it with a more sustainable relationship between travelers and local communities, one based upon mutual respect, reciprocity and celebration of living culture.

CX travelers arrive each year and honor the amazing talent of these indigenous artists, while at the same time recognizing the economic reality of a global economy that has pushed their traditions to the brink of extinction.

In partnership with the Peruvian NGO, CTTC: The Center for Traditional Textiles of Cusco.

CTTC is a non-profit organization established in 1996 to aid in the survival of Incan textile traditions and to provide support to weaving communities. Working with the Center, Quechua weavers and their families in the region of the former Incan capital are engaged in skill-building, community networking, and market development.

By researching and documenting complex styles and techniques of Incan ancestors, the Center helps to ensure that 2,000-year-old textile traditions will not be lost for future generations.

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The Center for Traditional Textiles of Cusco will be awarded the \$1000.00 honoree recognition funds at ETC 2007.