

## Paulina Tarqui : Weaving her future and opportunities in her region Puno - Peru

By the EU Delegation in Peru



Paulina Tarqui Pacoticona  
Mazocruz-Providencia

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*"I did not want her to participate in the training. It is just a waste of time, I told her. In the end, we realized that these trainings were good. While my wife was knitting, we sold products. Now, we are doing well and I support my wife"*

Gregorio Alanoca, Paulina Tarqui's husband.

Paulina Tarqui is an artisan who lives in Providencia, a small town located at 4,050 meters above sea level in the Puno region in Peru. The environment is arid and cold and poverty is widespread. The main economic activity of the people living in Providencia is raising alpacas. Incomes are generated by selling the alpaca wool and meat, but this is not enough to cover all the household expenses.

When Paulina heard that the organization "Manuela Ramos" offered training on knitting and women's rights through the project "Improving the access and income of the Quechua and Aymara women artisans in Puno", funded by the EU, she decided to attend the meetings without telling her husband. Thus, she only participated when her husband went to look after the cattle in the highlands, although with some concern as she knew that she would not always be able to keep her secret.

The days passed by, and Paulina gathered courage as she felt that it was time to tell her husband. She did not know what his reaction would be or what he would say –many men are chauvinist in Peru- but she thought that remaining silent was not an option and that she had to fight for what she wanted. So Paulina told her husband that she has the right to decide whether or not to participate in the meetings and trainings organized by NGO Manuela Ramos. He disagreed and forbade her to go. He told her she was just wasting time and it was better to stay at home taking care of the household and the children.

But Paulina said no and told him about everything she had learnt from Manuela Ramos. *"I also have rights and one of them is to attend meetings and receive training"*. At first Paulina's husband did not understand, but after a lot of arguments, he realized that she would not cede and, thus, he accepted. After that Paulina no longer had to sneak out to attend the meetings as if she was doing something wrong.

Paulina had to walk for about two hours before arriving to the place of the organization's meetings. However, after having talked with her husband about the meetings, she did not have to walk anymore. Instead he started to take her to the meetings on his motorbike. Paulina confesses that she was not always sure that she was doing the right thing and she had a lot of doubts, as many of the other women artisans were participating in the project. She was not sure that the trainings and the other activities would be worth all the trouble and efforts. Perhaps her husband was right and she was wasting her time?

However, as the project advanced Paulina's doubts vanished and she realized that she was learning a lot even by knitting the smallest crafts.

Gradually, Paulina and her artisan colleagues began to apply the techniques they had learned in the workshops. Paulina was now able to knit scarves, gloves, mittens and other products, which she took to sell in the markets and fairs, although not sure that people would like them. To her surprise, she sold everything at a great price during the first day and people even asked for more clothes and accessories. Many people told her they liked the design and the finishing of her products.

This situation was repeated every week and now Paulina had a new problem: she needed more time to spin and knit. Her husband realized that Paulina was becoming successful and began to appreciate her work. So he decided to support her by doing the housework and taking care of the children. That way, Paulina could spend more time knitting. This was a positive change for them both. The income of Paulina's family became better. Before they received about S/. 4 (approximately a little more than 1€) per pound of alpaca wool. By spinning and knitting the wool the income per pound became S/. 50 (approximately 14€).

*"This is the story I wanted to share with you. I am happy with my husband and my children. I learned to value my work and they also respect me and accept my views. We are more united and help each other with the household work. My dream is to one day become an elected authority in the village to help more women succeed."* – Paulina Tarqui Pacoticona, artisan.

#### Economic and social rights for Quechua and Aymara women artisans in Puno

The women that participated in the project have become more independent and make their own decisions regarding their economic activity and their incomes. Their role has changed from dependent to family providers. Women artisans have more personal and individual skills development (rejection of violence against women, exercising their reproductive rights and health).

**“Without economic autonomy there is no true autonomy.”**

Video Project : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j3CW2XPd6SU>



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- The EU financed the organizations "Movimiento Manuela Ramos" (Peru) and "Economistas sin Fronteras" (Spain) to carry out this action that empowered Quechua and Aymará women in the Puno region, in the Peruvian highlands, to have a better access to financial resources and more sustainable economic incomes.
- The project lasted 3 years and 3 months (March 2011-May 2014).
- Region : Puno. Provincias Puno, del Collao, Chucuito, de Mocho, de Huancané, de Lampa y de Azángaro.
- 1 000 Quechua and Aymará rural women benefited from the project.
- The project has increased the income of the women artisans. According to the baseline study, the average annual income from selling handicraft was 85 USD per woman. According to the survey conducted at the end of the project in 2014, the average annual income had become 215 USD.
- Contribución de la UE: 970 000 € ( 97 % del total)
- For more information: [www.casadelamujerartesana.com](http://www.casadelamujerartesana.com), [www.manuela.org.pe](http://www.manuela.org.pe)