Dear Family and Friends,

Thanks to your generosity, you made it possible for Kusi Kawsay to educate and empower more than one hundred indigenous children, youth and community members! You have been a part of growing an organic farm that provides local nutritious food, saves natives seeds and leads on environmental protection. You were in our hearts while we sang, danced and celebrated our Andean Ancestral Calendar throughout 2016.

Thank you for taking action, believing in what we do and being a part of this journey. Thanks to your contributions, more than one hundred children and youth were taught, mentored and inspired to find honor in their cultural identity and be an integral part of a growing community. You have helped us to move forward in our mission and vision – for a good living and happy life for some of the most vulnerable and at risk communities of the Sacred Valley. Our hearts are filled with encouragement and joy that we are able to do this important and necessary work. In the Quechua language Thank You is an expression of gratitude: Urpillay Sonqollay – which directly translates into “My heart flutters likes the wings of a dove”. Urpillay Sonqollay to each and every one of you.
Our visitors throughout the year

As we step back, take it all in, listen, feel and look at what 2016 has brought us, we are inspired by the experiences, stories and changes that shape us. Our allies and partners around the world have helped us make strides in training our teachers, expanding and strengthening our work and sharing knowledge with our community.

Teacher Training

Ken Smith, Patrick Marooney and Stephanie Felton Priestner from the Bay Area Center for Waldorf Teacher Training visited us in August, spending two weeks accompanying our teachers and students as well as holding after school in-depth workshops using Steiner lectures on child development, teaching science and math as well as chalkboard drawing. The two weeks were also filled with mentoring our teachers, sharing experiences and finding a beautiful balance merging Waldorf elements with Andean culture and tradition.

Our staff and teachers were also very fortunate to have Ursula Locher and Karin Eckstein, incredibly experienced Waldorf professionals from Switzerland. They held an intensive course on Botany. Our teachers learned about the Waldorf approach to Botany focused on the scientific subject matter weaved with imagination, the evolution of plant families, and the artistic fascination of observing and drawing plants. It was an incredible learning experience for our teachers!

Allies, Volunteers and Visitors

Our heartfelt gratitude goes out to our supporters near and far. We have never had so many visitors and volunteers come to Kusi Kawsay as we did in 2016! We would like to express our appreciation to all of you who took the time to visit us, share with us and support our efforts. Our returning and long-term volunteers this year included professional photographer Matt Dayka, High School student Sasha Hull, anthropologist and documentary filmmaker Walker Hull, farm to table agricultural economist Braydn Kawcak, Luke Paulson and our English teacher Katarina Sramova. ProHumanus, our long-term mentors visited us to conclude years of guiding us in this journey of developing, growing and manifesting our Waldorf knowledge. Wonderful visits also included our German supporters Inti Punku, Swiss allies Acacia and Paul Alexander with Regis University students specializing in non-government management to support us with our organization development. Global Fund for Children’s Program Officer for Latin America and the Caribbean Sandra Macias del Villar as well as APIA, our long-term partners from Switzerland also came to finalize plans of creating an Administrative space at Kusi Kawsay.

We are grateful for Kathryn Langstaff and Stuart Cowan of Autopoiesis, who joined us for a few months and are assisting us in fundraising efforts. We were also happy to receive a special visit from She’s The First, an organization from New York that support girls empowerment through scholarships. We would like to express deep appreciation to Pachamama’s Path and the entire board for their endless dedication to Kusi Kawsay through unyielding economic and emotional support. So many more people came through our doors this year, to each and every one of you, thank you for coming to learn, experience, share and be a part of us.
Secondary Level – Times of change at Kusi Kawsay School

Over the past several years, high school has been one of our greatest challenges for various reasons, and each year we have been confronted with making a decision to continue with the upper grades, or not. After months of deliberation and receiving guidance from our mentors and consultants, we have decided that in 2017, we will not have 8th, 9th, 10th, & 11th grades with the profound intention of strengthening the primary grade levels, raising salaries to a respectable wage and become financially more stable. In 2018, Kusi Kawsay will be a K-8th grade school. We will be reviewing and evaluating the possibility to reopen secondary level doors in 2018. Because of our love, care and connection with our students, we will not be offering academic courses for secondary level student. However, with a strong commitment and conviction, Kusi Kawsay will be holding after school workshops, events and gatherings not only for the students that are part of our Kusi Kawsay community but for those in the town of Pisac and surrounding communities!

After School Workshops 2017

With this tough decision came the motivation to initiate and strengthen after school workshops for our youth and the greater community. These workshops will mirror Kusi Kawsay’s Andean Legacy Project which is the foundation of the Kusi Kawsay Association and involves music, dance art, weaving, Quechua, Andean Cosmovision, and practicing environmental consciousness through agriculture and education to preserve and celebrate the indigenous Andean culture and identity. The workshops will take place at Kusi Kawsay School, Kusi Ñan Farm and our cultural center. The workshops will be open to our youth and the community allowing us to reach more people in our local area!

Rosaura Farfan – New Director of Kusi Kawsay School

Since the initiation of this endeavor, Rosaura Farfan has been a committed teacher of Kusi Kawsay. She leads the teacher trainings, has national and international Waldorf experience through workshops, conferences and courses and is entering her second year of becoming a Waldorf certified teacher as part of Peru’s first ever specialization in Waldorf Pedagogy. Along with Rosaura’s roots in Andean culture and traditions, she has accompanied teachers and students since the beginning. While the decision to focus on Kusi Kawsay becoming a K – 8th grade School was not easy, Rosaura keeps a positive outlook for the changes unfolding! Rosaura Farfan has therefore accepted the position as Director of Kusi Kawsay School for 2017. Her new role will include the responsibilities of training our teachers and accompanying them in their classrooms, collaborating and organizing with our Waldorf allies as well as focusing on students needs in this important phase of their development. We are confident that Rosaura will soar in this new position, strengthening our School purpose, mission and vision!
Kusi Ñan – Healthy bodies and strong minds

Throughout the years, we have reached many wonderful accomplishments, positive impacts and life altering moments, many of which were immeasurable and intangible – such as the empowerment of our children and youth, fortifying their self-esteem and cultural identity. In 2013, a group of students completed their education at Kusi Kawsay Andean School in December of 2012, went on to birth their own project: Kusi Ñan (Happy Path) - a project that has been measurable and tangible in ways, which continue to leave us in awe. From a garbage dump terrain to a fully-flourishing farm, this space now serves as a community gathering place where we grow food, we share meals, play music most evenings, sing and dance and host many of our Andean Celebrations.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to Alejandro Trevisan who spent more than two years mentoring, guiding, educating and sharing with our students. His expertise in Permaculture allowed Kusi Ñan to take shape. Since July of 2016, the organic farm is autonomously run by the youth. We have five full time workers, four of whom are original founders of the project, overseeing the farming, production, selling and teaching agriculture classes to the students of Kusi Kawsay. The farm is aiming for self-sustainability by selling its vegetables and green salad mix to local residents, restaurants and businesses. Kusi Ñan is very grateful to have the support of EMpower, whose Executive Director, Jeremy Llewelyn, visited this fall. Read more about Jeremy’s experience in Peru here. We are also so thankful for the invaluable skills of Enactus – our long-term supporters from Canada – for teaching business and marketing classes to our youth and students. We look forward to having Enactus back in 2017! While Kusi Ñan is an organic farm project, its roots are grounded in the empowerment of young people, equipping them with life skills and a strong heart to pursue whichever path makes them happy and purposeful in life.
Ñawpa Ñan – New land, new beginning

Kusi Kawsay’s happiness and purpose was birthed nearly twenty years ago through the protection, promotion and sharing of the Andean culture and traditions. Ñawpa Ñan (Ancient Path) is the web that connects us and has allowed us to be awake in this marvel that is life. It was with profound amazement we welcomed the news of a donation for the specific purpose of purchasing land for the Kusi Kawsay Association to pursue its work in keeping alive the Andean culture, celebrating it and honoring it. We ask you to please take the time to read our letter of gratitude to Monika Kronenberg from Germany, and our first experience visiting the new land, our new land.

We would like to say Thank You to Terence Buie and Enactus for their valuable support of the new land! With the support of Enactus, we completed the construction of a caretaker home. Our next endeavor is the implementation of a septic tank and a water supply system as the new land does not yet have access to this vital resource. After all, if there is one message that echoed around the world this year, it is that: Water Is Life. Without access to water, we cannot move forward with nourishing our field and also creating a Production Center, which will serve as part of Kusi Kawsay’s sustainability plan. Our hope is that in the near future, our financial health will be stable because of our efforts of seed saving, producing local weavings and food, and most importantly, continue providing safe, healthy and promising spaces for our children and youth that not only enable them to honor their ancestry, but also gives them economic opportunities that are based in the values of Good Living, Sumak Kawsay, Buen Vivir.
While the Production Center is still a dream to be realized, Kusi Kawsay has made several small and big steps towards moving closer to self-sustainability. As mentioned, Kusi Ñan is selling their organic produce locally, in the Sacred Valley and Cusco. At school, our board member, Edelmira Peña Soria, receives weavings from parents who are unable to pay for their child’s tuition. In the spirit of Ayni (reciprocity), they provide their artisan goods to the school as compensation for tuition. We sell these beautiful weavings at the school bazaar. Edelmira also buys local artisans goods to sell. Next time you visit us at school, have a look at our beautiful collection of student and parent made textiles and local arts! For the first time, we also opened a School Snack Store where we sell nutritious, organic, healthy foods and fruits during breaks. Our little store is very popular and successful – especially when Señora Carlota or Edelmira bring their homemade Swiss chard pies! Another one of our board members, Fielding Wood Vizcarra, has opened a store at the Pisac Inn Hotel where she features local artists goods and has a section dedicated to Kusi Kawsay School. Many goods from the schools bazaar can be found there, including Hugo Franco Salas artwork. Fielding has also had the opportunity to send crafts to international craft fairs. Thanks to the visit of Emily Hedges who visited Kusi Kawsay, crafts made it to the Canadian Wildflower School. Emily and her student’s skyped with members of the Association to learn about Kusi Kawsay and ask question about the intricate stories weaved into the crafts. Enactus is also planning on bringing back goods from our Bazaar to sell and raise for in Canada. If you are interested in collaborating with such efforts, please do reach out to us! We appreciate your dedication and help in this journey towards sustainability.

Another exciting development that we look forward to sharing with you is our Andean Calendar Agenda. Created by the Kusi Kawsay community, this Agenda includes artwork from our students and Art Professor Hugo Franco Salas, songs by our music and dance Professors Carlos Franco Salas and Tita Montegudo Zevallo, stunning photographs of the various activities and celebrations of the Andean culture all accompanied by the words of Roman Vizcarra, Professor of Andean Cosmovision and Rene Franco Salas, the Association’s Director. Keep your eyes out for the Andean Ancestral Calendar coming in 2017. More of our aims and efforts reaching towards fundraising and sustainability include creating Educational material, hosting our annual Food Festival in Cusco and bringing our music performances by Wiñay Taki in front of more audiences. We are continuously learning, strengthening our capacities and we are giving it our hearts best so that we may continue realizing the important work we do.
Building Bridges – Conferences and Gatherings

In 2016, we were fortunate to be welcomed to various Conferences and Gatherings. Rene Franco Salas and Alejandro Trevisan participated in a Conference held by MINGA, in country partners of EMpower and our consultants for Kusi Ñan. They are based in Lima. Marina Flevotomas, our Development Lead, took part in the Global Fund For Children’s Central and South American gathering in Lima as well as Humbolt University two-week intensive course on Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation in Berlin, Germany, hosted by the Institute for Rural Development.

Roman Vizcarra, Founding member, professor of Andean Cosmovision, Director of Social Wellbeing as well as Coordinator of Nawpa Ñan was invited by the Sacred Fire Foundation to be a panel speaker at the Conference of International Funders for Indigenous People (IFIP). Roman was honored to participate in this gathering in October that took place in Lima. The Conference brought together indigenous peoples from across the globe as well as organizations that support the work of indigenous communities. Roman spoke about Kusi Kawsay’s Educational experience and model, the challenges and triumphs of the Quechua Nation and the importance of cultural preservation, the indigenous struggles in the past and future and how Kusi Kawsay seeks solutions from local to global challenges. He met remarkable, impressive and inspiring indigenous leaders doing amazing grassroots work, giving guidance and strength, spreading love and gratitude, protecting the earth and their peoples ancestral wisdom!

Once the gathering concluded, almost twenty people including organizers, donors, indigenous people and NGOs that participated in the conference, came to visit Kusi Kawsay! We were excited to share all of our projects with our guests taking them to Kusi Kawsay Andean School, Kusi Ñan Farm, Nawpa Ñan Cultural Center and to the weaving community of Amaru – sharing food, dances and textiles with our visitors and leaving an indelible memory. The group was also able to experience one of our great needs for 2017, which is to support our brothers and sisters in Amaru to complete the construction of their cultural center. This space not only serves as the home for the 2017 Solstice gathering, but also allows for the community to have the necessary space to give and receive their intricate weavings, host visitors and welcome the opportunity for collaborations, conversations, healing and sharing tradition and culture.
Inspiring words from our Weaving teacher Lucia, of Amaru community: “I am teaching the children our ancient textiles left to us by our ancestors. Creativity and concentration is what the children do best. This isn’t like any other class where it is only about learning to read or write, this weaving that I teach, enters their mind and transforms the boy or girl so she is weaving her own life, it is like weaving our lives, how we live, how we are, how we must be. I also talk to them about nature, about the plants, about the Apus (mountains) and respect to their elders. We don’t choose what we weave randomly – they come through our dreams. For example (showing her skirt) here are the stars; we also exist in the sky, like on earth. We also represent the Ayni or reciprocity to practice Ayni means, you give to me, I give to you. It can be that something happens and you are not well, and then tomorrow I might not be well. So then, we have to practice Ayni: When you are sad I should give you joy, and when I am sad, you should give me joy. That is part of what is in our weaving. Our Grandmothers and Grandfathers lived like that and left this for us to pass on from generation to generation, that is what we wish.”
Each year, Kusi Kawsay aims at strengthening the foundation of our financial health so that our projects may continue to thrive and flourish.

If you have been accompanying us on this beautiful and profound journey, you know that our wish, each year, is the happiness, health and wellbeing of our children. In order to ensure this, our greatest need is the Ayni Scholarship Fund, which enables children to attend Kusi Kawsay! Our exceptional Monte Amador has created an interactive document to walk you through the story, costs and benefits of the Ayni Scholarship Fund.

As mentioned above, through our Ñawpa Ñan efforts, we wish to support the community of Amaru in the completion of their Cultural Center. Find our more details regarding the budget here. Our wish for this upcoming year is to dedicate our efforts toward realizing the first steps towards creating a Production Center on our new land. Our cultural project is also in need of strengthening the infrastructure already in place to enable disaster risk reduction measures due to slow and sudden onset of a changing climate, especially floods. We also ask for your support in our needs to practice the celebrations and documentation of our Andean Ancestral Calendar. Your support allows us to continue our ceremonial work, community-led healing and empowerment efforts.

Please continue to visit our Wish List to find out about our current and ongoing needs – including school supplies, farm tools and more! Thank you so much!
Conclusion

Another year has offered us the wonderful opportunity to impact lives. We believe that our ancestral wisdom guides our community towards a life of purpose that is dedicated to a planet in desperate need of conscious beings. With this in mind, we will begin 2017 with a monthly newsletter titled Words of Andean Wisdom. We will share with our family of supporters, justice and peace seekers, the journey of our Andean Ancestral Calendar to encourage a life of reciprocity in the present times, practicing love and respect for all of life. Come along; subscribe to our monthly Words of Wisdom here.

In our communities nestled in Andes, we have, for the past two decades, worked toward the recognition of our rights as indigenous people - creating cultural spaces to practice, preserve and celebrate our traditions. Our values, truths and way of life are being nourished through the projects we have cultivated. Dedicating our lives to our children, instilling gratitude, dignity and respect into their minds and hearts. They have truly become the medicine our mother earth has been longing for. As communities on the frontlines, it is our responsibility and commitment to lead a movement that reconnects humanity with the cosmos. To the unwavering support of our community, friends, families and allies, who make this dedication possible for us, we thank you for walking with us in this journey, supporting us, believing and knowing “Si, se puede” (Yes, we can).
Gratitud y reconocimiento a Ti y toda tu familia, por haber sido para nosotros la conexión del Mundo Andino con la familia Waldorf

Urpillay Sonqollay

In loving memory of Merlin Chaupin Romero Vizcarra.