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Words from our President

We receive the coming of new times with ever more complexity, for different motives, especially in light of the worldwide economic crisis and sequentially a controversial and incoherent management of political power throughout the world. We want to distance ourselves from this consumerist lifestyle and to follow in our ancestor´s footsteps, with their firmly rooted connection to Pachamama or nature, where the respect, tolerance, and wellbeing of all living beings originates. We are all daughters and sons of the cosmic creation; this wish is not ambiguous, communities exist as isolated indigenous populations of “Civilization” where people live happily as they practice these frameworks of ancestral life; but our geographic area socially speaking, is being devoured by the crushing urbanism and the subsequent social alienation that extinguishes cultural roots. It is here that Kusi Kawsay is building a path for girls and boys who alongside their parents wish to grow and shape themselves into beings of good with their capacity of “thinking”, “feeling”, and “doing” and in the future to also leave their dignified, positive mark of being an example to follow. This goal is not simply a dream or a passing illusion. I have an anecdote from my life that holds me up when I feel faint from worry particularly worry surrounding the economic sustainment of the educative project, this anecdote is also my elixir when I encounter critics who don’t believe in an alternative education (Waldorf-Andean) because they are afraid of independence and freedom after centuries of colonial submission.

It happened that one day, 10 years ago in the stretch from the town of Pisac to the school as I was walking competitively uphill with some students in the first weeks of the school year, I saw that close to the entrance to our school a tumult of girls and boys were urgently discussing something. They were positioned in a circle, when I neared them I heard worry being expressed in their voices as if someone had been hurt... has one of the students suffered an accident? I wondered, thinking worriedly of my responsibility as I accelerated my pace.
That’s when I started to hear with more and more volume phrases like: “don’t touch them their hurt”, “don’t move them it will make the pain worse”, “don’t get too close... let him breathe”, etc. etc. Almost frightened I arrived and joined the circle and to my great surprise, I initially did not see anything out of the ordinary. “What happened?” I asked. All of the children unanimously pointed to the middle of the circle... they said; “look teacher there is a little ant who is hurt and cannot walk”!!! I was speechless, surprised and weighing my reasoning with each opinion in respect to those present who were saying; “don’t touch him because when someone’s broken something it hurts more to move them!” Another side said “lets help it with a leaf so that I can get up by itself.” And so on... There was an attitude of pro-help indecision among the students who had been studying ad developing already for years at Kusi Kawsay.

When suddenly a new student who had recently come from the Capital of Peru (“the modernized” Lima) had a surprising attitude, of stomping on and smashing said ant saying: “so much fuss over that stupid little thing”!!! There was a moment of mass silence and some hidden tears which drowned our Andean-human spirit, everyone went into school with sadness and distress... I tenderly tried to soothe them, explaining that when we are disconnected from the open fields we do not know how to love and care for the different living beings in nature.

I continued reflecting on this lesson that life gave me. From that moment onward I say that those who enter Kusi Kawsay will be respectful of the right of life of other beings of the planet, they will be guardians of life and their role in society will be to be good leaders, good authorities, good parents, they will always defend the integrity and health and well-being of all that exists on the earth and its confines. This anecdote showed me that it is the fruits of handwork, Ayni, reciprocity, support etc. that we impart within the school and we give thanks for the humanitarian support of brothers and sisters (people and organizations) of foreigners whose altruistic spirit and economic support, will sustain this project in the service of future generations.
And finally the permanent presence of visitors, training teachers, tourists who have graduated from Waldorf schools, teachers and students all over the world, just as volunteers doing their thesis based on the experience of our school, delegations of professors from other schools in the department of Peru and at times abroad; it encourages us to keep going because to others, our work is perceived as a great example and furthermore when visitors have the opportunity to live the magic of Andean education, they conclude that if time machines existed they would use one to go back in time and study at Kusi Kawsay or at least, if it were easy to move to Pisac with all of their family they would do so in order for their children to study in this marvelous school where life is full and happy.

René Franco Salas
Kusi Kawsay Andean School

2018 was a year of challenges for the school: an additional kindergarten class and high-school classrooms, the incorporation of new programs such as gender equality, extra-curricular workshops and the continuation of this beautiful educational model which integrates both the Andean vision and Waldorf pedagogy. This was a great effort for the members of the school, who at times experienced moments of difficulty which in the end they were able to overcome with the motivation of knowing that their hard work would pay off and that the path that they are living is the path of Kusi Kawsay (happy living).
Highlights of 2018

The high demand for kindergarten in our school, resulted for the decision to be made at the end of 2017 to incorporate a new class for this level. With much happiness we welcomed our teacher Yessica who took charge of the second preschool classroom and of the communications in said area. Both Sara and Yessica said that this year in addition to working with the children, they also worked intensively with the parents, elevating their participation and level of commitment. In addition, with great joy we heard parents in the workshops expressing how impressed they were to see their children in school and this motivated them to implement healthier ways of interacting with their children at home.

Another important development, thanks to the financial support of Tom Webb and the collaboration of the parents was the incorporation of the covered structure in the kindergarten playground area, which helped us to protect the children from high temperatures during the different events of the school year. In the elementary school, comprised of grades 1-5, we also faced great challenges, as Rosaura, pedagogic director of the institution expressed. Once again, the involvement of parents was crucial, and through the development of more parent programs we attained high levels of participation and resulting in a deeper understanding of the educative mission.

The high school, made up of grades 7 and 8, was taught by teacher Lucio, whose goal was to support community and service, respect for diversity, communication, and tolerance through activities spread out during the year. The professor also began an internship at our sister school Kurmi Wasi in Bolivia, where he found an environment of learning, connecting, dialogue, debate and reciprocity among teachers, students, parents and the local population. The objective of this trip was to learn from the experience and good practices taking place at Kurmi Wasi, the fruits of which we will begin to see in 2019 in our new curricula for our upper grades.
Welcome students of Pachachaca

In the middle of the year we had the important and difficult decision of incorporating 10 girls and boys from Pachachaca orphanage, located in the district of Calca. Important yes... these girls and boys are of Andean origin, orphans or in high risk social conditions, in short they are the kind of children to whom Kusi Kawsay orients its mission, providing a dignified education that revalues its students as people and human beings. Difficult yes... these students come from a background of studying in state institutions, which have a very different dynamic to that of our school. The integration of the students was gradual but ultimately successful. We are very content to be able to count on our new students from Pachachaca.

Waldorf training

During the month of August we received a visit from Ken Smith and 9 teachers from the training center of Waldorf teachers from the San Francisco Bay Area BAWCTT. The visit consisted of two intensive weeks of in class accompaniment, feedback and supervision during the mornings and the afternoon trainings, whose final objective was for our teachers to fully internalize the pedagogy in order to be able to translate it and pass it on for the student’s benefit. The faculty learned different ways of teaching mathematics, chemistry, integrating two materials into a single class and the importance of using drawing at different developmental stages.
The training sessions also went beyond these teachings, delving into understanding the diverse personality structures of the students who can respond in a different manner to a determined rhythm, which aided in facilitating the management of the classroom and daily interactions with the students. Ken Smith and the other teachers consistently encouraged us to integrate this pedagogy with our Andean wisdom and they gave us very important lessons, among them the teaching not to be afraid of making mistakes, that creativity in contrast to the pressure and stress of the traditional academic model is what gives us vitality and that we will only understand these aspects if we put them into practice in our personal lives.

Valentin Boomes, an old friend from Germany, is a Waldorf professor. He has been visiting since August and will be staying with us through mid-2019. Valentin has conducted intensive training with our teachers, helping them in organizational matters such as teamwork, structuring meetings, and instruction for self-training. We are also thankful to his parents, Wolfgang and Annette Boomes, also Waldorf teachers, who visited us during their vacation and conducted a week of pedagogical training in October. After the experience and seeing our needs during the training, they sent us an abundance of books about the pedagogy, which helped us in our process of formation both in the school and in life!

On behalf of all of our teachers, students and school community: we express our heartfelt gratitude!
Allies, Visitors and Volunteers throughout the year

We nourish each other by sharing experiences, knowledge, stories, doubts, worries and solutions. Sharing makes us stronger and wiser; it amplifies our perspective and consequentially our range of thought and action. For us, that is Ayni, the Andean expression of giving and receiving or reciprocity.

The year 2018 was full of visits and support for which we are profoundly grateful. The members of the Indigimedia team were supporting us throughout the year in the graphic documentation of our events, improvement of our website among other exciting projects in progress. To Monte, Matt and Walker, we do not have words to express how grateful we are to you. In the area of administration and development, we had volunteers that supported us in the elaboration of proposals, reports, statistics and documentation as in the case of Lillian, Tracy, Julian, and Harriet. The school also relied on the support of Laia who offered support with pedagogic direction as well as on Alice and Martijn in 1st grade, in addition to the visit of Gregor from the Waldorf School Ljubljana of Slovenia. We keep all of these people in our hearts and we wish them the best in their next projects.

All of our allies were also present: Once again we were happy to receive Bettina Groher who visited us at the end of the year and gave us important information to receive support for our future projects. We had the pleasant presence of our allies from Intipunku with Coco Vizcarra. In addition, Jordan, Anessa, Sarah y Sandeep from Enactus were with us en May and even participated in one of our entrepreneurship workshops in collaboration with Kusi Ñan. We also received a visit from Daniel Parnetti of EMpower in October, who got to see the infrastructure of the school and farm.

To our allies from: Pachamama’s Path, Intipunku, Wilder Green Fund, She’s the First, Sacred Fire Foundation, Cultural Conservancy, Global Fund for Children, EMpower, Acacia, Apia, Prohumanus, Freunde der Erziehungskunst Rudolf Steiner, NEBiolabs, BACWTT, Yogacore and Pisqu, we extend our infinite thanks for the support received during 2018! Without you, it wouldn’t have been possible to see this school flourish for another year.
Rosaura: from school director to classroom teacher

After two years of completing her position as Pedagogic Director, Rosaura decided to return to teaching and apply her experience and knowledge to the classroom. In this way, in 2019, she will be a vital part of our teaching staff. In Rosaura’s words: “First, I want to give thanks for the trust and opportunity that Kusi Kawsay has given me in these past two years. The biggest thing that I learned was about human relations; something that taught me to have tolerance, patience, respect, gratitude and understanding for others but also to have firmness, creativity and humor. I should mention that it wasn’t easy for me to work with adults but as a team many things can be accomplished. It also gratifies me that the teachers can healthily discriminate between loving authority and friendship. It is after all what makes relationships flow harmoniously.

I LEARNED HOW TO LEARN. Urpillay Sonqollay to the members of the association, teachers, parents and visitors and of course to the girls and boys.”

With special recognition, Kusi Kawsay is grateful to Rosaura for her dedication as Pedagogic Director and is delighted to welcome her back to the classroom with her gifted teaching skills.

T´ikari Ñan or the Flourishing Path

After years of hard work in education, agriculture and cultural initiatives, the Kusi Kawsay Association saw it as a priority to incorporate a program that would empower women and permit them to be leaders in their communities within the different projects that they undertake. We had the honor of working with organizations such as EMpower and She’s the First (STF) whose principle focus is working with girls and young women.
T’ikari Ñan was born as a program of Kusi Kawsay which is dedicated to empowering women and girls and which has already produced two groups: Warmiquñac Rimaynin – the voice of women in Quechua- a group consisting of women from our community and a group of girls from 4th to 8th grade from the school, called: Strawberries Dipped in Chocolate and Women that Can Change the World. With our holistic vision, Warmiquñac Rimaynin could provide a safe space for intimacy where problems and solutions of daily life can be shared and always approached from a cultural Andean perspective, recovering the ancestral wisdom of women through personal interviews with woman elders and in this way expanding and continuing our work in recovering the Andean culture. For its part, working with the group of young girls, as Indira Minaja, coordinator of the Women’s program explains turned out to be a very enriching experience, the girls were not only receptive to the global awareness program that they worked on with She’s the First but they were also open to sharing their yearnings, joys, worries and above all the importance of the role of mothers, who are their greatest example of successful women.

We are grateful to Ani Ventocilla, friend from Kusi Kawsay, who represented us in the STF Partner Meeting in New York and sent us great news about the work done with the girls
Kusi Ñan organic farm

If we could describe in one word what characterized Kusi Ñan in 2018, that word would be: change. The past year was a year of changes on both an organizational and locational level. This helped us to rediscover what it is that we hope to accomplish with this project and to give it a new impulse, this time in the direction of working with women and students from the school.

Highlights of 2018

To see how the founding members of Kusi Ñan, inspired by what they learned from the project and the diverse workshops offered throughout 2018, decided to embark on their own paths, is a sign of success that fills us with both happiness and nostalgia, after all we shared many years with them. In this way our chacra or farm now works principally with young women and single mothers from our community, who are in charge of the production of agricultural products and of teaching horticulture and permaculture to our students at Kusi Kawsay. In May we had a visit from members of the Enactus team, who enthusiastically worked with our youth and inspired us with new ideas about the sale of products and equipment for the farm. They participated actively and supported with the publicity of the Kusi Ñan Gastronomic fair, which was a success as in past years.
In mid July, we received the sad news that the land in which Kusi Ñan was developed had been sold and we had to abandon the area, which had been with us since 2012. After carefully evaluating this situation, the members of the Association decided to move the project up to the school grounds. Preparing the soil, moving the beds and transplanting was arduous work which finally resulted in a marvelous solution. Now the school grounds look beautiful, enhanced by different beds of vegetables and flowers.

The workshops were an important pillar of this project in 2018, these workshops under the guidance of EMpower were oriented towards promoting access to education and entrepreneurship through healthy agriculture and the strengthening and development of gender equality, leadership and communication skills among the young people. We give thanks to the specialists who helped us in the different meetings and workshops: Elena Gnalez, Oscar Oviedo, Klaus Laintenberger, Lucio Ali, Roman Vizcarra, Carlos Franco, Joel Chacón and Hugo Franco.
Ñawpa Ñan

The cultural project Ñawpa Ñan permits us to remain connected to our ancestors, our roots and the remembering of who we are and where we come from. This year, besides celebrating agrarian Andean calendar in our community, we hosted an international event in celebration of the Solstice where our brothers and sisters from diverse indigenous nations shared with us during five unforgettable days.

Solstice

Around 200 people celebrated and strengthened their commitment with our native pueblos during the XV International Gathering of Indigenous Peoples Inti Raymi 2018. Over the course of five days song, dance, presentations, shared challenges, solutions and achievements from all the nations were shared at our Cultural Center in Taray. To the Shipibo Ceilán Nation of Ucayali Central, the Taquile Nation, to the Amaru Community, the Aymara Nation of Southern Peru and Bolivia, Tewa Nation of Taos New Mexico, to the Piaroa Nation of Venezuela, Tlahtokan Nahuacalli of Tonatierra from Arizona, to the Danzantes de Tijeras, our brothers and sisters from Ayacucho and to all of those who shared these memorable days with us, we thank you from the depths of our hearts for being a part of this great family knowing that we are all accompanying each other in the path of life, in the path of Kusi Kawsay.
The profound commitment of the Kusi Kawsay Association through their project Ñawpa Ñan, takes us year after year on a journey that maintains and celebrates the Agrarian Andean Calendar in an authentic way.

In this tradition, in February/March we flourished, danced and paid tribute to fertility and abundance with Pukllay. On March 21st we sang to the sun, in the midst of its journey with the equinox. From April to June we had the Kallchay or the celebration of harvest time. We honored the Southern Cross in its time of fullness in May and we realized the pilgrimage to Q’olluriti, the sacred source of water. We celebrated Inti Raymi with the winter solstice in June. We carried out offerings of reciprocity to Pachamama before planting in the month of August. We planted with the festivities of Tarpuy in September and in November we honored our ancestors and prayed to them for rain in the celebration of Machu Qhaswa and finally in December we had the Kapac Raymi or summer solstice in which we venerate the sun and receive its strength and energy when it is at its closest point.

Andean Celebrations

In all of these celebrations, members of Wiñay Taki Ayllu and the traditional music group Kusi Ñan are always present, just as all of the participants from the Kusi Kawsay Association. We give infinite thanks for accompanying us in this path of vindicating our ancestral Andean culture.
Sustainability and the Andean Legacy Project

The Andean legacy is our treasure and it encompasses all of the projects of the Kusi Kawsay Association. Through the practice of ancestral agricultural techniques, business workshops, wellness practices, reclamation of our native language and traditions, as we celebrate the Andean Calendar, we are empowering a new generation to be respectful, resilient and to be loving leaders of our community and the world, as we share employment opportunities and sustainable life practices.

Kusi Kawsay contributes to the following Sustainable Development Education Goals with its Andean Legacy Project.

Needs and Wishes for 2019

As with every year, our list of wishes includes patrons for our Ayni Scholarship Fund. We are still urgently seeking funds for a covered structure in Kusi Kawsay to protect our students from the strong sun. For matters of communication it would be important to have audiovisual equipment, sound systems, a projector wireless microphones as well as recording equipment. We are hoping to install a means of outdoor lighting (preferably solar). We are always in need of school items such as scientific equipment and microscopes for our chemistry classes. Waldorf art materials such as colored pencils and paints (Stockholm), easels, paper especially for Watercolor and books for our library are always welcome.
We have designated a second kindergarten classroom and we continue looking for resources such as Waldorf dolls, toys, art materials and the construction of bathrooms so that the young students can have the same accessibility and play area as those of the original classroom. With the growth of our school, it is also necessary to construct a classroom for the Andean Legacy classes and a second-high school classroom for science.

For the Cultural Center, we are focusing on maintenance and the extension of the curative community space to include the therapeutic possibilities of medicinal baths for our community elders and those that suffer health problems. We would also benefit greatly from donations for our cultural events.

In Kusi Ñan, we would be relieved to have an irrigation system to confront the water scarcity that we face annually: this would include a reservoir and a water system (pump and tank) to be able to channel the water from the canal nearby the school and to use it in our field. It would also be important for our hardworking women to have tarps to protect against the rain, sun and radiation.
Reflection

Changes can be good and sometimes necessary to make room for growth, new opportunities and experiences. We embrace these times of change as we continue directing our work towards the empowerment and celebration of our cultural identity and the wellbeing of Pachamama. As we reflect on 2018 and all of the experiences lived this year, we anticipate our welcome of 2019 as a truly special year, designated by the United Nations as “The Year of Indigenous Languages” and that marks 100 years of the Waldorf Pedagogy. We hope to contribute with our knowledge and gratitude as we continue nurturing with love this project called Kusi Kawsay!

All of us at Kusi Kawsay regret the passing of our dear friend, Tom Webb, this past year. Tom gave so much to each of us, in so many ways, and especially love from his warm and generous heart. Thanks again for this shadow structure! We will miss you, but keep you in our hearts, Tom.

Urpillay Sonqollay