

Proposed Project:

Organization Information:

Amano is a venture of Blue Sparrow, a registered 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization with projects in Peru, that helps Peruvian Andean women make a better life for themselves and their families through their knit clothing—made from 100% alpaca designs. When someone purchases her item, she triples her income. And women have knit clothing for themselves and their families for generations, passing the skill from mother to daughter to granddaughter. Meanwhile, the family raises the alpacas whose fur is sheared and spun into yarn. With the availability of cheap imported textiles, knitwear and natural fibers are losing their place in Peru's cultural landscape. The craft has not yet been lost, but it is endangered. Knitting is now a secondary practice, something that is done for special occasions or to sell at the market. Here's the problem: A pair of gloves sold at the local market brings in about \$1 for their maker. A sweater is worth almost \$10, but takes a week to make. Simply put, it's not worth it. Amano gives proper value to these artisans' skill and elevates the pride associated with the craft. (taken from amanoperu.org)

Service Opportunity Information:

In this project, I hope to make a lasting impact on the lives of these Peruvian women. I will be providing them with valuable tools and useful information (in the form of a curriculum) to help them start their collaborations with retailers all around the world.

From the beginning of June to the beginning of August, I will be volunteering with Amano to expand a Microfinance project that was started in Huancayo, Peru last summer. One of the largest problems faced by the existing microfinance organizations is that they offer high-interest loans that can actually worsen indebtedness. Amano is different in that the organization offers free help and will not put the Peruvian women at financial risk. If we are able to successfully bring in retailers who are willing to sell the finished projects, the women will be able to establish successful businesses, though, they will be encouraged to reinvest the amount of their micro grant in a community fund, so that micro grants can be distributed to others in the community to promote more widespread economic development.

The goal of this project is to help the Andean women started their own craft microenterprise and develop leadership skills. Currently, I, along with a few other Wharton students, are in the process of writing an interactive curriculum in English and Spanish on business fundamentals (accounting, marketing, personal finance, social responsibility, etc), which we will teach the women this summer. To create an appropriate curriculum, we are building upon last year's curriculum which was taken from Knowledge@Wharton High School online resources, *Entrepreneurship: Owning Your Future*, the official textbook of the Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE), and Wharton business class textbooks.

The women with whom I will be working with come largely from backgrounds of poverty and suffering. By giving these women a sense of purpose, I hope to provide hope, in addition to beneficial instruction and tools to improve regional economic growth and financial literacy. Our long term goal is to provide these women with business expertise that will guide them to benefit the community as a whole. I plan to stay in contact with the women and the Amano staff upon returning to the United States. I speak for my team and the organization when I say that the dream is to connect Amano with a student group, such as Penn Microfinance or Penn International Business Volunteers, so that more students can help make a even greater social impact in developing countries. From this project, I hope to make a lasting impact on the lives of these Peruvian women.

As described in my resume, I worked with a team in my Management 100 class during my first semester in Wharton. In this class, I learned to efficiently plan events, strategize for effective fundraising, and communicate professionally with a client. Most importantly, I learned how to work collaboratively with a group of extremely intelligent people to maximize productivity.

I intend to join the MicroFinance club at Penn this coming Fall semester, upon returning from my summer internship in Peru. Through this club, I will be able to share my experiences in working with Amano and Blue Sparrow. Additionally, I will stay actively involved by giving presentations, raising funds and engaging in media outreach. I hope to inspire others to embark on a similar journey—to bring hope to struggling people in other countries.