**World Connect**

**Site Visit Report**

**Date of Site Visit**: November 15, 2022

**Name of Project/s**: Revitalizing Otavalo's Kichwa Cultural Museum

**Project #:** 18-159

**EFP Affiliation:** RPCV

**Funding Date**: March 2019

**Amount Funded**: $2,690

**Community/ies**: Otavalo, Imbabura, Ecuador

**Site Visit Host/s** *(who did you communicate with to organize the site visit & who was present during the visit):* The Zambrano Maldonado family: Luzmila, René, René, Elizabeth, Sairy

**Staff or Representative/s Present**: Alli Tolbert (also present: Tiffany and Peter Hall)

**Lead Author**: Alli Tolbert

**Phase of Project –** *double click box to select*

**☐ Design –** *project has not yet launched*

**☐ Implementation –** *project is in progress at time of visit*

**☐ Post –** *visit is within one year of completion of project*

**X Ex-Post –** *visit is greater than one year from completion of project*

**To be completed before the Site Visit:**

**Pre-visit Project Summary & Status**

*This section should summarize the scope, goals, and objectives of the project based on your review of all project materials* ***before your site visit.***

The Otavalango Living Museum’s project goal aimed to strengthen the museum’s income-generating activities such as the cultural tours and social event space. This was accomplished through a series of training workshops on business development, a 1-day event to commemorate a Kichwa holiday and showcase the Museum’s space and activities, and strategic investments in the museum’s overall restoration. A new Photo Exhibit, an eye-catching exterior mural painted by a local Kichwa artist, and renovations for the tourist bedroom and bathroom were part of the restorations. The Museum noted an improvement economically, culturally and organizationally due to this project, boasting an increased number of tourists and events.

The Museum was also a beneficiary of the COVID-19 Relief efforts in 2020 (Project #20-068). A small garden was planted with a portion of these funds.

**What materials did you have access to before the site visit to review (progress report, informal progress updates, final report, additional materials)?**

* Application
* Progress Report
* Final Report
* Site Visit Report December 20, 2020

**Key Individuals Involved in the Project:**

**Please include the Established Field Partner (EFP) and Local Leaders’ names and contact information (i.e. phone numbers, emails, etc.). If the EFP is not still on site, please note when they left.**

EFP: Alli Tolbert +593 99 351 9198. Alli still lives a 20-min bus ride away and remains in close contact with the families of the Museum.

Local Leader: Luzmila Zambrano +593 99 385 3344. Luzmila and her family, who lead the Museum project, live on-site and run overall operations.

**Guiding Questions:  
In addition to the questions detailed below in this report, please list any other project-specific questions you plan to clarify during your visit based on your review of the available project materials. The answers to these project-specific questions can be added to the end of the Site Visit Report. For Field Agents, these questions (up to 12) should be discussed with World Connect staff before the Site Visit.**

**How much has income increased? How much income is required for the museum to be sustainable?**

The Museum shared that since the project investment, income had increased about 15% from increased tourism due to marketing and better management, and from the Casa Cruz event space that was renovated. Due to COVID-19, the Museum attendance halted immediately, and only began regaining momentum in late 2021. The Museum is still not sustainable. Roughly $800 is needed per month to be sustainable. Tourist visits alone are not sustainable. The Museum’s second income for social events (Kichwa weddings, baptisms, etc) supports the sustainability. One event is rented for $150 per day, and they have about 2 events per month, totalling $300 per month. The Museum also rents space to a carpenter for $100 per month. In total, the Museum receives about $900 in income for its various activities. At the moment this is enough to be sustainable.

**How much longer is the loan? Is there any way that World Connect can help pressure them to forgive the loan?**

The majority of the loan has been paid ($650,000), however the remaining interest payment is $250,000. According to the Museum members, if World Connect had an opening with the Ecuadorian government and they could talk about canceling interest, it would be wonderful because if the president issues a resolution in this regard, the debt would be settled.

**How many tourists and income each month?**

The visit of tourists varies season by season, however there is an average of 80-100 tourists per month, totally $400-$500 per month.

**How many people are receiving salary or income?**

We have 4 people who are receiving a salary or income from our activities. The Museum member families all receive a small income as well, but the members interviewed do not consider this a salary.

**How many other activities are there?**

In addition to the guides, the Casa Cruz (large event space) is being rented for social events, rental of traditional clothing. The garden that was planted during the pandemic (and a result of the COVID-19 Relief project funded by World Connect) continues to grow and provide a healthy, stable food supply. They also rent out the carpentry workshop to a carpenter.

**To be completed after the Site Visit:**

*Please complete the Site Visit Report template below after you have visited the site to capture all of your findings. Please list any financial data in local currency and USD if possible.*

**Post-Site Visit Summary**

**This section should summarize the key findings from your visit. Include key quantitative data points.**

Despite the challenging setbacks from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Museum has demonstrated its resiliency in bouncing back to its normal monthly average of tourists and income ($500/monthly, or 100 tourists per month). The Museum has continued to build upon the investments made from this project, making improvements to the tourist quarters and successfully renting them out about 60-70% of the time. They have also continued investment in the Casa Cruz venue space and rent it out 1-2 per month for an income of $150-$300 monthly. It is becoming a recognized and respected space for Kichwa cultural events such as baptisms and weddings.

**Community Characteristics –** *Please describe the community/ies, the geography, driving distance (in minutes/hours) from the nearest big city, socio-economic perspective based on the site visit, political or cultural considerations, etc.*

Otavalo, capital of Otavalo Canton in the province of Imbabura, has a population largely made up of the Otavalo indigenous group (Kichwa Otavalo). According to the 2010 census, the town has 39,354 inhabitants and has an elevation of 8,307 ft. The indigenous Otavalo people are famous for weaving textiles, usually made of wool, which are sold at the famous Saturday market. During the market's peak, almost one third of the town becomes full of stalls selling textiles, tagua nut jewelry, musical instruments, dream catchers, leather goods, fake shrunken heads, indigenous costumes, hand-painted platters and trays, purses, clothing, spices, raw foods and spools of wool. As the city has become more of a tourist attraction, many of the goods sold in the markets are mass-produced in nearby factories and sold in the market by middle-men. Otavalo was an area made up principally of farming communities due to the rich volcanic soils in this area, but with the growth of tourism, the town has begun to focus more on the making of handicrafts which have made the Saturday market a popular stop with visitors to Ecuador. Tourism has become the town's main industry and as a result there are many more hotels, hostels, and tour operators than other similarly sized Ecuadorian towns, such as nearby Cayambe. Further, Otavaleño (people from Otavalo) have had notable success selling their goods abroad.

**Key Individuals –** *Please list the Established Field Partner, Local Leader, and any other key individuals that have played a large role in this project. Give us a brief description of each person’s role in the project and in the community. Did you speak with any representatives of relevant associations, organizations, or governments who were involved in the project? Please include the contact phone numbers and emails of any key individuals not listed earlier in the Site Visit Report.*

EFP: Alli Tolbert. Living in a nearby community (Turuco, Cotacachi). Alli was involved in supporting the design and implementation of the project. Alli provided technical support in writing the reports and translating communications between the Community Organization and World Connect.

Local Leader: Luzmila Zambrano, Coordinator and Lead of Museo Otavalango. She continues to lead activities and overall operations at the museum, and serves as the face of the organization for public events.

René Zambrano: Luzmila’s husband and the Co-Coordinator of the museum. René is often behind the scenes running operations, managing the Museum community members, and maintaining the grounds.  
Sairy, Lenin, Elizabeth: Luzmila and Rene’s sons and daughter-in-law: support with tours, communications and everyday activities, English/Spanish translations and communications as necessary.

**Key Groups –** *Please list all key groups that were involved in the project. This can include relevant associations, organizations, governments, etc. that played a role in this project. Please include the name of the key group, anything you learned about the group’s history/origins, and a description of the role(s) the group played in the project.*

The Museo Viviente Otavalango ("Museo") was founded in 2009 and has been open to the public since 2011. The Museo is a "dream come true" for founders René and Luzmila Zambrano. When René was younger, he worked in the textile factory of San Pedro – the buildings that house the museum today. Years after working there, curiosity led him back to the factory where he found it in ruins. Furniture and antique looms had been stolen, and the forest had grown up to the buildings. Inspired to rescue the building, René and Luzmila organized a group of people to start restoration. They united men and women from the countryside and city, indigenous people and mixed race people. Eventually, they were able to purchase the historic buildings from the government. Some of the exhibits display items that were recovered from the original factory. The Museo is run collectively by 21 families.

**Key Results – In this section, we want to understand as much as we can about the results of the project based on your site visit observations, conversations, and learning. What has been accomplished to date? Include specific and quantitative, numerical data where possible. Please elaborate on the specific activities, outputs, and outcomes related to the project’s goals and objectives.**

The Museum’s income has increased roughly 40% since the project implementation, with an income of approximately $900 per month from tours, venue rental, and a carpenter workshop rental. The investment in Casa Cruz venue space renovation has allowed for a secondary income of $150-$300 per month. Project investments in tourist quarters (bathroom/bedroom), a new photo gallery exhibit, the exterior mural and improved playground and lookout tower improvements are all in continued use.

As a recipient of the COVID-19 Support funds (Project #20-068), a small garden was planted with a portion of these funds, which has now tripled in size and contributes to the family’s food consumption and overall food security. The garden has vegetables, fruits and medicinal plants. There is no income-generating motive to this part of the project; the food is used for the family and Museum members’ consumption and overall food security. However, elements from the garden are used in meals that are offered to volunteers who may stay the night or for an extended period of time.

**Leverage Impact –** *Please indicate and describe any additional investments made or promised toward the project or community as a result of the World Connect project. Please include details of who contributed, how much was contributed, when the contribution was made, and what led them to contributing to the project.*

In 2022 the Museum received a small fund of $2,300 from the United Nations to carry out workshops with young people to dialogue with the Kichwa youth in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals. Funds were used to prepare meals for the dialogue participants, buy didactic material for workshop facilitation, and a museum souvenir. Funds were used directly for these purposes. There is no direct increase in visitors since, however the Museum hopes that this will bring more visitors and collaborations in the future. In terms of the residual debt, the Museum had not considered asking the UN to speak to the government about the pending debt. According to the family, “it could be considered.”

**Participant Feedback –** *Please ask at least three project participants the following questions: What did the project change for the community and what did it change for their families specifically? Include direct quotes and/or participants’ summarized responses below.*

Luzmila Maldonado: We are very grateful for the recognition and support that World Connect has given us, they have believed in projects that our own local government doesn’t see the potential of. And in this way we are reminded that what we are doing is important, it is valid and necessary for our future Kichwa cultural legacy.

Lenin Zambrano: Due to World Connect project funds we have been able to make improvements that we couldn’t make possible before, they were investments we just didn’t have the resources for. And you can see how we have taken advantage of them as much as possible, you can see how we have been strategic to make the best use of them. And we have continued building on that foundation from the project.

Elizabeth Belén: Receiving World Connect funds helped organize the group, it supports the vision of what we want to see here at the Museum.

**Community Organization -- What did you observe about the group cohesion or team dynamics? Did any of the women, participants, or relevant observers speak about a change in confidence, leadership abilities, the community’s trust in them, etc.?**

The Museum families continue to be resilient, supportive and tight-knit. Not all families were present during the tour, but various individuals who pertain to the Museum membership (the 21 member families) were in the background and there was a notable team dynamic and “togetherness.” Luzmila shared that during the pandemic, families relied on each other more than ever and came together to support one another in their struggles.

**Key Challenges –** *Please summarize any ongoing challenges related to the World Connect project/s that came up or that you witnessed during the site visit and how the community is working to overcome them.*

The Museum is continuously challenged by the lack of local political support from the local government. They would like more recognition as a tourist destination, but have setbacks in terms of marketing and connecting with bigger tourist operators. Another challenge is that the Museum has the $250k loan payment pending.

**Is the project sustainable? Yes X No ☐**

*Describe what sustainability means in the context of this project and specifically why you selected Yes or No. If the project is being implemented at the time of the Site Visit, please elaborate on the sustainability plan, whether the project team has made adjustments to their original sustainability plan, and whether the community is on track to maintain a sustainable project post implementation. If the project implementation is complete and the site visit is taking place in the post or ex-post phase of the project lifecycle, please describe the sustainability of the project and whether you observed a project that is being maintained as planned. Based on what you have learned during the site visit, is the project sustainable?*

Yes, the project is overall sustainable in that there are still tangible and visible results from the initial project investment, and there is a clear building upon of these investments. For example, the event space that was renovated with paint and other investments from this project is continuously being improved upon when the Museum has income to do so, and it is being used about twice per month. While the Museum is still working towards overall operational sustainability, they have shared being much closer to overall sustainability since the World Connect project investment (clear numbers could not be gathered).

Also, the Museum was a recipient of the COVID-19 Emergency Support funds (Project #20-068). While the majority of these funds were used for emergency support such as virus protection and dry goods, a portion was invested in seeds and accommodating a community garden. This garden has grown and is providing vegetables for the Museum families’ consumption.

**Do you see potential for another project in the community? If so, please describe.**

*The focus of any future World Connect project should be grounded in one of the following:*

* *to cement sustainability of the original project*
* *to enhance the impact of the original project*
* *to advance the work of a local individual who emerged as a leader in the original project*
* *to advance the work of a local group that emerged as key to the success of the original project*

At the moment, there was no clear ask for funds or a proposed project that they are seeking to complete. The Museum members are consistently seeking to improve the infrastructure and facilities, so it is likely that if asked, they have numerous initiatives they could implement. So as not to create expectations on this visit, we did not inquire about project proposals or interest in funds.

**Site Visit Follow** **Up**

1. *Are there any tasks necessary to follow up from the site visit?*

No.

1. *Did we promise to do anything specifically during the site visit?*

No.

1. *Who should receive a thank you communication and what type of communication?*

The Zambrano Maldonado family has received a thank-you written by Alli on behalf of World Connect and the Hall family.

1. *Who in the site is the best point of contact moving forward? Please include their contact phone number(s), email(s), etc.*

Luzmila Zambrano Maldonado +593 99 385 3344