

# **Liderezas Mayas Project Feasibility Study**

**Parsons The New School for Design  
Graduate Program in International Affairs**

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## **I. Executive Summary**

A select group of representatives from the Graduate Program in International Affairs (GPIA) and Parsons The New School for Design (Parsons), along with representatives from CARE, were asked to explore ways to empower a group of Mayan women in Guatemala—Liderezas Mayas—by helping them develop a business model to export their handcrafted products to the United States. The intention of the initial feasibility study was to test the viability of a sustainable export business model and its potential replicability in other villages around the country, other parts of Central America, and across the world.

The village of San Lucas Toliman in Guatemala was selected as the site for the initial pilot project due to the Liderezas Mayas' existing partnership with CARE, their relatively young membership, their high literacy levels, and their interest in taking advantage of globalization to improve their business opportunities. The Liderezas Mayas are interested in finding ways to improve their lifestyle and supplement their family income; using their skills of weaving traditional Mayan textiles, assembling beaded belts, and producing bamboo baskets.

In our initial assessment we found that these women lack many of the skills required to convert their vision into reality. They do not have a real understanding of basic business skills like business development, marketing, sales, accounting, inventory and quality control. They are not familiar with Western market requirements and fashion design and trends. And finally, they cannot produce a finished product since the majority of the women do not possess the necessary set of skills (sewing, patternmaking, sizing).

Secondary research was conducted on existing export businesses involving Mayan women weavers, to better understand how to support the Liderezas Mayas to develop their own business enterprise. This research showed that several individuals and organizations are already exporting Mayan products to the United States but the role of Mayan weavers has been limited to the manufacturing of the textiles. At least one successful designer has been working with Guatemalan weavers for several years using a model where the artisans manufacture products of

her design. These products are then sold in retail stores (i.e. Bloomingdale's) as luxury items. Two questions arose from the case study research: a) should we attempt to link the women from San Lucas Toliman with existing sales channels, and b) does the process of manufacturing textiles designed by an established designer empower women artisans in Guatemala and other developing countries?

We conducted focus group studies among a target group of women in the United States. Initial findings show that potential U.S. customers will buy a quality product of quasi-traditional design where the women in the developing country make money. The studies also confirmed that CARE's "I am powerful" tag line and Parsons designer's link have a positive impact on the buyer. We need further clarity, which will come as we proceed with the pilot project.

Our initial conclusion is that, although selling through existing channels or manufacturing for designers may increase the Liderezas Mayas' short-term income, this approach does not provide female artisans with opportunities to learn new and better techniques and also improve their quality of life while maintaining their individual creativity and culture. The new model proposed in this report can benefit a large number of women in multiple villages over a long period of time.

We therefore plan to develop a business model where GPIA/Parsons students will train the Mayan women in the set of skills required to start up their own business and design and produce innovative products. We expect to start in January 2008 with a GPIA course in which both GPIA and Parsons students will learn key concepts and skills essential to support development of small business enterprises focusing on the empowerment of women. The course will culminate in a trip to San Lucas Toliman by a select group of students to conduct the training. This process could be slow but, we believe, is more sustainable since it will genuinely help the Mayan women improve their skills and ensure they make money for themselves.

The business model described in the following pages is sustainable and can be multiplied in other villages and countries, regardless of the types of products. This process, if successful, will not only create educational and economic opportunities for women living in poverty but will also

create connections between female artisans and students based on the exchange of knowledge with benefits for both parties. It should be stated here that there is no surety that our approach will be successful, but it is worth the effort to test its viability in San Lucas Toliman. We expect to learn from this pilot project and modify the approach and business model as we move forward over the coming years.

## **II. Mission**

The Guatemala pilot project aims to develop a replicable model that integrates marginalized women from the developing world into the global economy, while providing learning opportunities and connection points to women here in the United States as well as New School students. In order to do this, the initiative aims to:

- Improve the Liderezas Mayas’ business, organizational and design skills through training workshops.
- Enhance the academic experiences of the students involved by providing hands-on learning opportunities.
- Develop a designed-by business model which elevates women in developing countries to a new social position by playing a pivotal role in the actual design of the products.
- Create a business that is sustainable for the women and the communities we engage.
- Preserve and strengthen the women’s culture, heritage and traditions.
- Address not only marginalized women’s economic exclusion but also the social exclusion.
- Provide a model that can be replicated and scaled up within Guatemala and other countries.
- Link to women in the U.S. in a way that supports furthering the movement to overcome global poverty.

## **III. Pilot Project**

The New School and CARE have partnered on a pilot project in Guatemala to support a group of Mayan women—Liderezas Mayas—to develop their current textile craft production into a sustainable export business. The commonly used export business model for Guatemalan products is a “Made-by” model (explained in further detail in Section VI) in which a designer provides designs which the Mayan women produce in quantities required by the designer. The pilot

project seeks to test the viability of an alternative business model—the “Designed-by” model (explained in further detail in Section V) which engages the artisans in the design as well as the manufacture of not only the textile but also the product. In collaboration with design students from Parsons, the Mayan women will create designs that appeal to buyers in the United States. With the “Designed-by” model, the artisans can potentially receive a higher income since they will not only be the manufacturers but also the designers.

### **1. Project Objectives**

- Increase the income of the women working with the Liderezas Mayas.
- Increase the Liderezas Mayas knowledge in business and product design.
- Strengthen the organizational skills of the Liderezas Mayas.
- Raise the quality standards of the products produced by the Liderezas Mayas.
- Provide The New School students with practical experiences and exchanged knowledge.
- Develop an alternative method of production which engages other women in the community and surrounding areas with the project.

### **2. Feasibility Study**

In order to test the viability of the original assumptions regarding the proposed “Designed-by” business model and to decide whether or not to proceed with the project, six members of The New School and CARE representatives traveled to Guatemala to conduct a feasibility study. The study attempted to:

1. Assess the Liderezas Mayas’ products, current production process, organizational skills, commitment and expectations;
2. Explore possibilities of engaging in a business plan using a “Designed-by” model instead of a “Made-by” approach, and;
3. Examine how to use the skills of an academic institution to support the Liderezas Mayas.

For the feasibility study research, The New School team met and interviewed the Liderezas Mayas, CARE, government officials, human rights activists, export and trading organizations, and experts in micro-finance.

### **3. Market Research**

Marketing the textiles made by Mayan women in the United States is essential for this pilot project to succeed. The New School and CARE have conducted focus groups studies in Manhattan and Atlanta to determine the target consumer's perception and understanding of the "Designed- by" concept while exploring preferences and attitudes toward Mayan woven products. As expected, the results in the two cities were different. Initial results from the focus groups from Manhattan and Atlanta indicate that there were some similarities and several differences. The similarities were:

- Aesthetic and quality of the product are the key drivers when making a purchasing decision.
- Production and sales that guarantee Mayan women more money and advancement of their skills add value to the product.
- Association with CARE and their "I am powerful" campaign would considerably help in selling the products.
- Association of Parsons in the product design would enhance the value.
- The biggest challenge will be communicating the concept. What is so different/better about putting a woman from a developing country in the design role?

The differences were:

- While women in Manhattan would buy products in designer stores or boutiques, those in Atlanta were more likely to go to department stores.
- Price of the products was likely to be a factor in Atlanta but not in Manhattan

We expected such differences and plan to adapt our sales strategy for major metropolitan cities and other parts of the country.



#### IV. Existing “Business” Model

##### 1. Products and Production

*Products:* The Mayan women presently produce cotton and woolen textiles using the traditional back-strap loom. These fabrics are about 4 feet long and 30 inches in width. The loom used by the women cannot produce a wider fabric because of the limitations of the back-strap loom. The women learn their trade from the elders in their families. The designs that they use have been passed on from mother to daughter over generations. The designs and patterns are generally geometric and often have stylized motifs of flowers, birds, and everyday household objects. It is worth noting that the designs and colors vary from village to village and are easily distinguishable. There are some special designs that can be specific to certain weavers or families. Quality of the fabric is not always consistent as it depends on the skill of the weaver and the time allotted for the production of the textile.

We believe that the products the Liderezas Mayas currently produce – textiles, bamboo baskets, beaded belts – would not sell in the U.S. on a sustainable basis. In order to export their products, the group would need retraining in new products and design. These textiles and other items also need to be of consistent quality.

*Production and Maquiladoras:* Their current process of production has many inefficiencies, is time-consuming and not cost-effective. A garment is made when money is needed, rather than as part of a structured production process. Weaving is a secondary economic activity that women do at home while caring for their families, and it usually takes up to two weeks of part-time weaving to produce one textile. The following chart illustrates the current process to make a huipil, the Mayan women’s traditional garment:

<b>Steps</b>	<b>Current process to make a huipil</b>	<b>Problems with the process</b>
<b>1</b>	The decision to make a garment for sale is made. This decision is based solely on the immediate need for money.	No inventory No structured production and/or design process
<b>2</b>	Thread is purchased per garment from a	Not cost effective

	supplier at the local market.	
3	Weaving—1-2 weeks	Time consuming—not cost effective
4	Finishing—take textile to local tailor which costs 10-30 Quetzales	Costly
5	Selling—in the local market, to local people and to occasional tourists	Not enough consumers Too long to sell

The Liderezas Mayas take pride and attribute critical importance to the manufacturing of their products. The women prefer to work on their own as the human rights situation and labor conditions of the maquiladoras are abysmal.

We would therefore suggest alternative production methods if the market is looking for better quality products in larger quantities. We may consider: a) involving more San Lucas Toliman women, b) involving women from surrounding villages, c) spending more time working on the product, d) upgrading loom technology to more efficient looming or other weaving equipment.

## 2. Market

- *Local:* In the actual setting, there is no local market: San Lucas Toliman is not a tourist destination like other communities around Lake Atitlan. The women currently sell door-to-door to others in their own community. It can often take months to sell a product, and the price may not be what they should really get for their effort.
- *International:* Sales in the international marketplace are limited to Mayan women selling their textiles and other handcrafted items to visitors and occasional buyers coming from abroad.
- *Competition:* There are existing competitors in the U.S. market. Shops in Manhattan, Washington DC, Seattle and other major cities sell Mayan textiles and certain finished products. Several internet sites also show Mayan textiles for purchase. Further market research is needed to confirm if these shops and sites are successful in selling Mayan products on a long-term basis. Mayan textiles can be seen also in some Museum

shops like the Textile Museum in Washington, DC and at National Geographic shops. We expect to see designer products in stores soon as well.

### 3. Organization

Liderezas Mayas are “organized” but not as a legal entity. Liderezas Mayas do not have a clear organizational structure or transparency. Further, we were never entirely clear as to how they function as an organization. Although the organization does have a president, vice president, and treasurer, no clear responsibilities or roles are assigned. In order to take advantage of government and NGOs programs they would need to go through the legal process of becoming an officially registered association or cooperative. On the other hand, micro finance organizations only give funds to individual women and not to companies. We need to work out how individuals in a cooperative can access debt finance from micro finance firms operating in developing countries.

### 4. Business skills

The Liderezas Mayas do not have an understanding of business concepts as we know them. They need to get a better handle on how to price their products, how to purchase better quality raw materials and at lower prices, and how to quantify overhead—the time spent to produce and sell a product. The following is an approximation of their costs based on information the Mayan women were able to provide us.

<b>Cost Analysis*</b>	<b>Cost per Huipil (blouse)</b>
1) Thread (40 Q per pound)	\$ 13.3/Q100
2) Cost of Labor- 42 hrs per Huipil	\$16.8/Q126
3) Cost of Selling—(overhead 15% of total price)	\$6.00/Q45
4) Sewing and finishing	\$4.00/Q30
5) TOTAL ESTIMATED COST	\$40/Q300
<b>6) Product sale price</b>	<b>Whatever they can get</b>

\*Based on this cost analysis, there is no revenue for labor because overhead—time spent selling, time to do other productive activities—is not calculated. Current cost of labor= \$0.

## **V. Recommended Model**

### **1. “Designed-by” instead of “Made-by”**

*In the “Made-By” Concept*, women in developing countries are in the role of manufacturer, making products by hand. A designer provides the women with designs to mass produce. These women have relatively small input into what product is made, or why it is made. The underlying issues with the model are:

- The women do not develop their skills beyond the physical, hands-on making of the products.
- The women are not learning about the market or design industry.
- The products tend to be low quality and low fashion and sold at a low price.
- The women often receive a very small percentage of profit.

*In the “Designed-By” Concept*, women in developing countries (initially, Guatemala) are elevated to a new social position by playing a pivotal role in the actual design (in cooperation and advice from a budding designer) of the products. The “Designed-by” approach provides the women with the skills to design their own products and move up to the value chain of designers rather than just manufacturers. The envisioned products will marry the joint design and style, with the spirit and voice of Mayan women. Trained in the necessary skills (quality control, product design and development, business and organizational skills) the women can have the opportunity to be creative and develop products which reflect their heritage while appealing to market trends. The primary benefit is to truly empower women in developing countries in a new way—to design and share their individuality and grow intellectually and economically. The key concept here is to expose the Mayan women (soon others), adding value to what they have produced for generations, thereby improving their quality of life. At the same time, these same women have their culture, heritage and traditional skills that need to be preserved.

## **2. Production and quality concepts**

It is intended that the Mayan women will preserve their long lasting weaving tradition. They will continue to use the conventional back-strap looming technique that has been transmitted from mother to daughter for centuries. The possibility of incorporating new technology has not been discarded but further research is needed as to its implications for the preservation of Mayan tradition and heritage.

The collaboration between Parsons students and Liderezas Mayas will have to take into account the Mayan women's current design and production process and find innovative ways in which both approaches can be combined. The students will learn the traditional way to measure the threads needed for each pattern, how to design while weaving, and how to construct products from rectangle-shaped textiles. The women will learn how to incorporate the students' design and patternmaking processes into theirs and how to produce finished products with high quality standards.

During the collaboration process, students and the Liderezas Mayas will specialize in a certain aspect of production: weaving, cutting, stitching and sewing, and quality control. After the fabric has been designed and woven, it will be made into a final product by a member of the group specialized in cutting the material to a specific pattern. The pieces will then be sewn by a member with the necessary sewing skills. If any assembly is required then this will be done by this final person as well. One of the women from the group with the most experience will be asked to make sure that the final product is right in every aspect before it is packed and ready for shipment. The production process and quality checks could be done by women in the same family, though this is not essential.

The plan we envisage for production is nothing like one would expect in a normal factory. In order to create the quantity needed to sell internationally, we have considered: a) involving more San Lucas Toliman women, b) involving women from surrounding villages, c) spending more time working on the product. The first two methods of production would have a larger impact since they would benefit women from San Lucas Toliman and from the surrounding communities.

### **3. Marketing and sales concepts**

Business development, marketing and sales are probably the most important elements that will make or break this business. Although the primary market for the finished products is expected to be the United States, it might make sense to consider selling within Guatemala, Central America and Mexico as a starting point, and gradually move up to the United States. We expect to verify this hypothesis as we move forward with the pilot project. At this stage, it is not clear how or to who the products will be sold. However, it is probable that sales will not initially be made directly to the end consumer, but will be sold in the United States through retail stores and luxury boutiques, which would buy in bulk directly from Guatemala.

It is planned that the cooperative set up in Guatemala by the women will have one person who is the primary contact with the outside world. During the formative stages it is envisaged that the person in Guatemala will communicate with the representative of the New School- CARE office. All communication and billing will be done through this person. All export documentation will also be completed by the woman in charge of marketing.

### **4. Local management concepts**

As mentioned earlier, the Mayan women have set up an informal organization that appears to function in a manner similar to a cooperative. It is our intention to formalize this cooperative. All the women in the cooperative will provide the skills necessary to make the final product. It will be necessary to help the women specialize their skills set into basic elements like weaving, cutting, stitching and sewing, and quality control. In addition, it will be necessary to have one or more of the women understand basic business skills that will include accounting, billing, and production and inventory control. Our initial findings tell us that each woman in the cooperative will be able to obtain debt finance using the micro finance groups as they act in their individual capacity within the cooperative.

### **5. U.S. sales channel**

In the United States our intention is to set up a U.S. organization, either a company or a non-profit, that will import the goods from Guatemala. They will be responsible for the inventory and final quality checks. This U.S. organization will work with the retail stores in this country. All shipments will be made from the Mayan Women U.S. Corporation/Non-profit to the locations specified by the retail stores.

The above is only a brief outline of the concept. There are a lot of detailed steps that need to be taken before such an organization is set up. In the meantime, it is suggested that New School and CARE set up an interim organization consisting of one person and an assistant to manage the start-up of the concept.

The plan that we have outlined above will require ‘seed money’ to get it started for the next several years. It is our intention to proceed with the pilot project and work through the opportunities and issues for at least two years. It is our firm belief that our plan will be successful in helping the Mayan women set up an on-going business and also in creating learning opportunities for New School/Parsons students. The program will meet the needs of CARE as they establish their program to empower women in developing countries.

## **VI. Role for The New School:**

The GPIA and Parsons have created an interdisciplinary program which will offer students a comprehensive understanding of key concepts and skills essential to support the development of small business enterprises focusing on the empowerment of women. During the spring semester students will be trained in these sets of skills and in experiential learning and non-formal education techniques. In the summer semester, a selected group will travel to Guatemala to gain hands-on experience, working with the cooperative of Mayan women in developing the skills necessary for creating a sustainable business enterprise. Selection will be made based on grades, language skills and faculty evaluation.

Below is an outline of the Spring-Summer Courses (see Appendix II for further details). The content of the course attempts to address the issues faced by the existing “business” model (see Section IV).

## **Spring**

**Session 1:** Introduction to Guatemalan/Mayan culture and history. Mayan weaving tradition, textiles and huipiles.

**Session 2:** Introduction to the Liderezas Mayas project

**Session 3:** Market research and market analysis

**Session 4:** How to conduct workshops/trainings

**Session 5 & 6:** Organizing a cooperative/association

**Session 7 & 8:** Basic business skills

**Session 9 & 10:** Product development and design

**Session 11 & 12:** Pattern making and sewing/finishing

**Session 13 & 14:** Quality Control

**Session 15:** Review Guatemalan/Mayan history, culture, traditions. Review proposed lesson plans.

## **Summer 2008—Tentative and subject to change:**

**Day 1-Day 2—**Introduction to Guatemala and the Liderezas Mayas' project.

**Week 1—**Liderezas Mayas teach the students their production process, weaving, culture, history, language and/or other skills.

**Week 2 and 3—**Students share with Liderezas their own experience with design and product development, business and organizational skills.

**Week 4 and 5—**Students and Liderezas collaborate on designing a product.

**Week 5 and 6—**Students and Liderezas plan and organize a final event/fair.

**Week 6—**Students and Liderezas reflect on the experience in order to understand the lessons learned and potential next steps.

Through a collaborative approach between Liderezas Mayas and The New School's students and faculty, the women from San Lucas Toliman will receive training in design, product development, basic business and organizational skills, and quality control, among others, to



better produce and export their products. Simultaneously, this collaboration will create learning exchange opportunities for The New School students, providing them with an understanding on how to apply the skills they learned to real life situations.

## **VII. Next Steps**

Following the feasibility study research in Guatemala and the market research, The New School team recommends moving forward with the project. Although the Liderezas Mayas' products as they currently exist would likely not sell in the U.S. market, with adequate training the women could design and produce quality products for export.

To comply with one of the main project objectives of maintaining Mayan culture and heritage, New School faculty agrees that it is best to start with a focus on handmade luxury items, as opposed to mass produced. Based on the Liderezas Mayas' strong feeling about producing their own products, and our own uneasiness with engaging maquilas for mass production, the group feels it is best to avoid maquilas. During The New School visit to Guatemala, the Liderezas Mayas shared a clear concern around mass production in regards to preserving the true nature of their centuries-old handmade work. The Liderezas Mayas strongly believe that the best products to sell will be handmade.

Initial research indicates that a market already exists for more expensive, handmade, well produced items that can be sold in a higher price bracket. This focus will allow the New School trainings to focus on each particular product, aligning it with the sharpening of specific skills, as opposed to focusing on the speed with which products can be made. This approach also aligns clearly with the pride the Mayan women feel in the making of each of their products.

The New School team strongly believes that the project will be a model that can be replicated in other areas in Guatemala and around the world. The market research will help the project determine the target consumer's perception and understanding of the "Designed by" concept while exploring preferences and attitudes toward Mayan woven products. We envision that marketing the products through storytelling and eco-friendly techniques will create a connection, among women artisans and consumers that goes beyond product exchange.

## **VIII. Timetable**

Fall 2007 Semester:

- a. Market survey conducted
- b. Feasibility Study with Go/No Go decision completed
- c. Development of courses to meet Mayan women's needs and desires.

Spring 2008 Semester:

- a. Inter-disciplinary courses that will train the students to be trainers.
- b. Final Feasibility Study Report with market research presented (February).
- c. New project proposal and budget written.

Summer 2008 Semester:

- a. The Mayan women with the support of the New School students will design a collection of products (June).
- b. Activities to promote the new products during the summer (street fair, fashion show).
- c. The New School/Parsons office in the USA will start promoting products from Guatemala to stores throughout the country.

Fall 2008

- a. The New School/Parsons teaching program will continue as shown above. In addition, we expect to increase the number of Mayan women participating in the program.

Spring 2009

- a. New school and CARE to review the results of the pilot program and make modifications as necessary.

A complete business plan for the activities by New School/Parsons and CARE will be provided for the ongoing activities during the coming weeks. This will be modified as we move forward.

The final plan will include women from other villages in Guatemala.

## **Appendix I: Trip Report**

### **I. Roster**

The New School:

1. Fabiola Berdiel: Project Manager, Graduate Program in International Affairs, The New School for General Studies.
2. Jay Dehejia: Design and Management Faculty, Parsons The New School for Design.
3. Alice Demirjian: Director, Fashion Market, Parsons The New School for Design.
4. Ximena Gutierrez: Student, Graduate Program in International Affairs, The New School for General Studies.
5. Mark Johnson: Assistant Professor, Graduate Program in International Affairs, The New School for General Studies.
6. Cynthia Lawson: Director, Integrated Design Curriculum, Parsons The New School for Design.

CARE:

1. Allen Clinton            USA
2. Otto Gonzalez        Guatemala
3. Richard Kiger        USA
4. Florentina Lec        Guatemala
5. Renan Lizano         El Salvador
6. Emma Méndez        Guatemala
7. Marcos Neto         El Salvador
8. Alejandro Zepeda    Guatemala

### **Trip Schedule**

#### ***Day 1: Sunday, October 7, 2007—Arrival Guatemala City***

The New School team and two members of CARE Central America, Marcos Neto and Renan Lizano had an introductory meeting over dinner at Hotel Princess.

#### ***Day 2: Monday, October 8, 2007—San Lucas Toliman***

##### **Meeting with 18 Liderezas Mayas and NS/CARE team**

Liderezas Mayas explained their group, their expectations, and current activities. The New School presented the “design by” business model. In-depth interviews with Liderezas were conducted.

**Day 3: October 9, 2007- San Lucas Toliman**

Meeting with 15 Liderezas Mayas and The New School/CARE members

The group divided in small groups consisting of three Liderezas, one New School representative and one CARE representative. The groups visited the homes of the Mayan women. The Liderezas Mayas demonstrated how to use the waist loom. The women also escorted the groups to the market to demonstrate how they purchase the raw material needed for the products.

**Day 4: Wednesday, October 10, 2007- Panajachel, Solola**

Full day meeting of the entire New School and CARE team at Porta Hotel.

CARE presented their organizational goals, strategic roles and programs for poverty reduction. They also described the “designed-by” model and why it was chosen for the project. Some discussion arose in regards to the end goal of the project. It was agreed that the end goal of the project is connecting American women with these Mayan women by selling the product in the US.

**Day 5: Thursday, October 11, 2007- Guatemala City**

1. Cámara de la Industria’s representative Walter Flores.

The Camara de la Industria can assist groups like Liderezas Mayas with access to information on the US market, access to financing, and with the process of becoming a legal entity to take advantage of government subsidies for imported raw material.

2. Ligga Barrios from Vestex, AGEXPORT.

VESTEX provides services in marketing, labor code of conduct and training. VESTEX works with trade shows, international fairs, showrooms for textiles and online sales. VESTEX provides labor codes of conduct for maquilas, however, compliance is voluntary. Maquilas are not required by law to meet the code of conduct in Guatemala.

As part of their training services VESTEX works with a training center called INTECAP. INTECAP trains women on quality control. However, the women from San Lucas cannot take advantage of this opportunity until they become a legal organization and increase their production capacity.

3. Meeting with Vice Minister of Economy regarding national policies that can assist the Liderezas Mayas.

The Department of Economy does not get any funds from the government to specifically support groups like the Mayan women. As such they are not able to give any cash grants or subsidies.

However, the Department has several programs to assist the women, including allocation of space for their work and training seminars. The department has a section that helps women set up cooperatives or associations.

#### 4. Center for Legal Action and Human Rights (CALDH).

According to CALDH, the “least bad” job for rural women in Guatemala is working in a maquiladora. However, workers do not make minimum wage and work long hours in unsanitary conditions. There are various health concerns associated with women who work in maquiladoras. There is a code of conduct in Guatemala but many government officials are paid by the factory owners, who do not meet the requirements, to pass this code of conduct.

### **Day 6: Friday, October 12, 2007- Guatemala City**

#### 1. AGEXPORT.

AGEXPORT provides workshops on quality control and assists producers with the paperwork required for exporting products. The textile products AGEXPORT exports are characterized by simple designs, woven by foot looms (traditionally done by men), rather than waist looms, which are faster. The products range in price from \$1.5 to \$12, of which 40% goes to the exporter. In the US, AGEXPORT sells these products to Bloomingdales, Pottery Barn, and small boutiques. AGEXPORT focuses on the “made by” model. They have tried the “designed by” model but believe that it takes too long and women “become frustrated” with the project.

#### 2. Rural Business Association (AGER)

AGER is an organization that functions as representative and facilitator for small rural producers. AGER organizes capacity building workshops, provides technical assistance, connects producers with buyers, and assists with access to financing.

AGER works with a rural women’s organization called LEMA. This group produces products with natural fibers and dyes. LEMA can train Liderezas Mayas in the techniques required to weave and dye natural fibers.

For Liderezas Mayas to work with AGER they must be legally organized, actively producing, and be a dynamic group with an entrepreneurial vision.

AGER allowed us to purchase some of LEMA’s products for the market research.

## Appendix II: Spring / Summer 2008 Syllabus

### **The New School Graduate Program International Affairs Parsons The New School for Design**

#### **Spring 2008 Course Timeline Guideline:**

**Session 1, Week of January 22: Course Introduction. Introduction to Guatemalan/Mayan culture and history. Mayan weaving tradition, textiles and huipiles.**

**Instructor: Mark Johnson**

To understand the course structure, grading requirements and reading materials.

To introduce students to Guatemalan and Mayan culture, history and Mayan weaving tradition.

Reading assignment for next session: Guatemala trip report and Feasibility Study.

**Session 2, Week of January 28: Introduction to the Liderezas Mayas project.**

**Instructor: Mark Johnson**

To understand the Liderezas Mayas project.

- Discuss Feasibility Study and trip report in order to understand project objectives and the proposed next steps.
- Introductory discussion on market research (both primary and secondary).

Reading assignment for next session: Market Study.

**Session 3, Week of February 4: Market research and market analysis.**

**Instructor: Alice Demirjian, Erin Cho**

This class will look at current market research on Guatemalan textile products. Students will be introduced to the tools needed to collect and analyze market data.

- Discussion of market research (both primary and secondary) and analysis of outcomes.
- Discuss Target Consumer - Demographics and Psychographics
- Discuss basic marketing strategy – product, price point, where it is sold and promotion.
- Discuss current selling channels of product.
- Discuss possible branding strategies and Care's role.
- Introduction to market research tools.

Reading: Training materials.

Assignment: Students will research and evaluate retailers selling Guatemalan textile products in NYC.

**Session 4, Week of February 11: How to conduct training sessions.**

**Instructor: Shon Morris**

#### **Class 1**

To understand some concepts of how to be an effective trainer, taking into consideration several factors including: learning styles, culture, community empowerment, and sustainability.

- Introduction to Experiential Learning and Non-formal Education Techniques.
- Facilitation
- Roles and Responsibilities of groups and group members.
- Cultural Matters (part 1)

- Sustainability

Reading: Training materials.

**Class 2: This class could be taught as another two hour class later in the semester or in pieces—30 minutes at the beginning of some of the other classes.**

Students will continue to develop ideas and skills of being an effective trainer in the scope of “development,” specifically looking at participation and community action.

- Participation.
- Design components of Experiential Training Session.
- Participatory Analysis for Community Action (PACA).
- Core PACA tools.
- Culture Matters (part 2)

Reading for next session: List will be provided.

**Session 5 & 6, Week of February 18 and 25: Organizing a cooperative/association**

**Instructor: Erin Cho**

Entrepreneurs generally consider themselves to be generators of ideas that can be turned into a profit-making business. However, many entrepreneurs have little understanding of what needs to be done to move from a creative idea to setting up an organization to support the concept. It needs both skill and creativity to draw on the best available talent to make a success of the opportunity.

In this class we will review:

- How organizations can be set up.
- How these organizations behave through the stages of moving the company from a start-up phase through raising venture capital money, to becoming a sustainable organization.
- Why some organizations and cooperatives fail.

We will provide theoretical background and a practical survey on how some entrepreneurs have succeeded or failed in the endeavors. Appropriate case studies will be discussed in class.

Reading list and case studies will be provided.

Assignment: Work on a potential lesson plan for the training session in Guatemala.

**Session 7 & 8, Week of March 3 and 10: Basic business skills**

**Instructor: Jay Dehejia**

Artisans have the skills to design and make a product from basic raw materials. Business skills are those that are needed to ensure that the products are made in an efficient manner which will generate a profit for the people involved in making that product.

In this class students will learn:

- The concept of a company.
- Basic accounting skills.
- Cost of inventories and elements of effective buying. Consider sourcing of raw material suppliers and apparel contractors, both domestically and offshore. Trims and findings.
- Marketing and sales techniques and avenues.
- The process of putting together a line plan and budget, working with design and merchandising.
- Pricing the garments.



We will provide theoretical background and a practical survey on how some entrepreneurs have succeeded or failed in the endeavors. Appropriate case studies will be discussed in class.

Reading list and case studies will be provided in due course

Assignment: Work on a potential lesson plan for the training session in Guatemala.

### **Session 9 & 10, Week of March 24 and 31: Product development and design**

**Instructors: Cynthia Lawson, Pascale Gatzien.**

To understand the role of product development – planning a product line from conception to production sample – and the analysis of retail timelines and production timelines.

In this class, students will:

- Consider, understand, and discuss the “Made By” & “Designed By” models.
- Outline and understand what a design process is.
- Learn to conduct or interpret research to determine fashion trends for developing a retailer’s product line for a specific target market.
- Understand what may already be the women's design process, and contextualize it in product development.
- Analyze proposed merchandise and explore its advantages and disadvantages within a specific market segment.
- Color Selection, Fabric Selection, Print Motifs, Silhouette determination, Concept Boards

Reading list will be provided in due course.

Assignment: Work on a potential lesson plan for the training session in Guatemala.

### **Session 11 & 12, Week of April 7 and 14: Pattern making and sewing/finishing**

**Instructor: Pascale Gatzien**

In the first session the students will understand the basic skills necessary for pattern making and sewing accordance with industry standards. The second session will consist of a hands-on pattern-making exercise.

Assignment: Work on a potential lesson plan for the training session in Guatemala.

### **Session 13 & 14 : Week of April 21 and 28: Quality Control**

**Possible Instructor: Michelle Alleyne (TBD)**

Quality is an essential part of the finished product without which the process cannot be considered complete.

In this class, students will learn:

- How quality control works in practice
- What elements need to be checked at each stage of the manufacturing process: identify what product specifications are and how to measure and Spec a garment/ product, read retail and manufacturer production requirements: Terminology and Specification Sheets.
- Control Methodologies: How to develop fabric, color and sizing standards.
- Product Inspection and constraints
- What needs to be done to ensure that an error does not get ingrained in the product as it is produced
- How and at what point in the process should a manufacturing change be made to make sure that the error does not happen again.

We will provide theoretical background and a practical survey on how some entrepreneurs have succeeded or failed in the endeavors. Appropriate case studies will be discussed in class. Reading list and case studies will be provided in due course  
Assignment: Work on a potential lesson plan for the training session in Guatemala.

**Session 15: Week of May 5: Review Guatemalan/Mayan history, culture, traditions.  
Review proposed lesson plans.  
Instructor: Mark Johnson**

### **Summer 2008 Course Timeline Guideline:**

#### **Day 1-Day 2—Guatemala City/Antigua**

Introduction to Guatemala and the Liderezas Mayas' project.

#### **Week 1—San Lucas Toliman**

Liderezas Mayas teach the students their production process, weaving, culture, history, language and/or other skills. [Need to discuss with Liderezas]

#### **Week 2 and 3—San Lucas Toliman**

Students share with Liderezas their own experience with design and product development, business and organizational skills.

#### **Suggested daily schedule:**

**9am – 10am** –Students share Thoughts/Questions/Reflection on the day before.

**10am- 12 pm** – Revise lesson plans. Students rehearse lecture, interactive activity, hands-on activity for new workshop. Go over language that will be used.

**Lunch with the women**—It would be nice to have these kinds of activities, everyday things, which will spark more interaction, and just a friendly environment. Eating together, is one example.

**2 hour afternoon session**—New content. New workshop—lecture, interactive activity, hands-on (in the case of sewing, etc.). Questions/Homework.

**2 hour afternoon session** - Hands-on sessions. Apply what was learned the day before. What was retained? What needs to be reviewed? Later in the week, this will be the time to show what was made (particularly if we give them homework.)

#### **Week 4 and 5—San Lucas Toliman**

Students and Liderezas collaborate on products. During these weeks the students and the women will put into practice the design and product development skills learned during through the training sessions. Faculty will guide the process of collaboration.

These two weeks can also be a time to review training sessions as requested.

#### **Week 5 and 6—Lago Atitlan**

Students and Liderezas plan and organize a final event/fair. During this week the students and the women will put into practice the business and organizational skills learned during the training sessions. Faculty will guide the process of collaboration.

Possible activities: Trip with the women to Panajachel, Chichicastenango, Guatemala City or Antigua to see price difference when buying raw material from other suppliers and exposure to tourist markets, Fashion Show, Street Fair.

#### **Week 6—Lago Atitlan**

Students and Liderezas reflect on the experience in order to understand the lessons learned and potential next steps.

#### **Other suggestions for potential activities during time spent in-country:**

- Community Analysis activities: Understanding the community can help us design a better project and trainings that will take advantage of the resources/opportunities already in existence and understand the challenges that we are facing.
  - Community Mapping- Students work with the women in small groups on creating a map of the community.
  - Next day- All students together review the maps and see what they can learn from them (resources, movement, opportunities, challenges).
  - Other examples are creating 24 hour clocks and seasonal calendars in order to understand better the women's schedules and yearly activities.
- Hands-on work activities (weaving, housework, businesses).
- Language classes.
- Time just to spend with the family- no objectives besides family time.
- Additional cultural and technical classes (speakers, history, field trips).