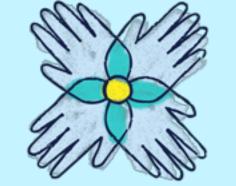


UNITED HANDS- A Look at Educational Opportunities for Youth with Disabilities in Cusco, Peru

Emma Crosby

University of Michigan School of Social Work



Manos Unidas

INTERNATIONAL

Peru

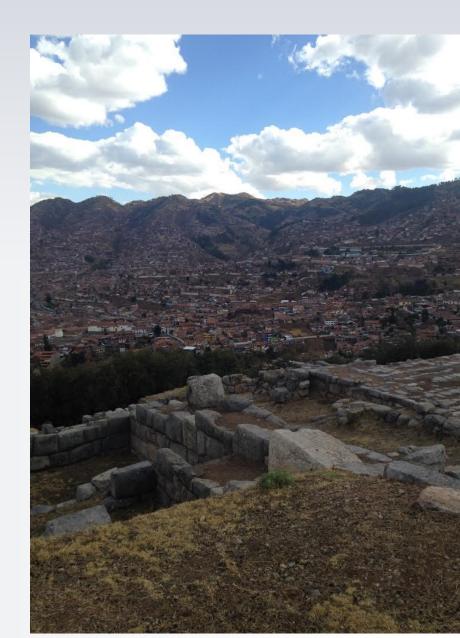
- Location: western coast of South America
- Population: > 30 million people
- Official language: Spanish
 - Quechua and Aymara are common aboriginal languages spoken
 - Over 40 languages are spoken in the Peruvian Amazon
- "In Peru, 70% of the population does not know what mental health means" and only ¼ of the people who need mental health care get attention (Fraser, 2007)
- •A national mental health plan was initiated in 2006 that called for mental health to be seen as a fundamental right and called for universal access to community –based mental-health care (Fraser, 2007)

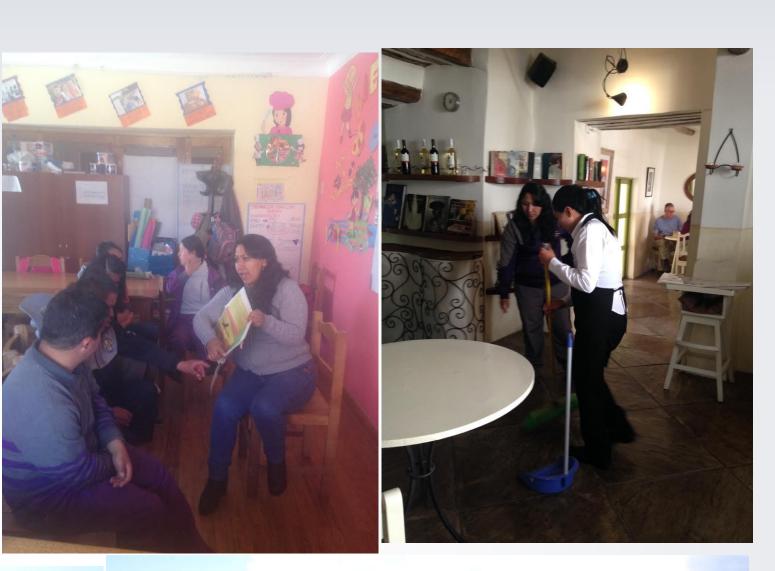
Cusco

- Located in southeastern Peru in the Andes mountains
- Cusco was the capital and geographic center of the Incan empire
- Cusco means "navel of the world" in Quechuan, the language of the people native to the Andes
- Population of about 427,218. Elevation of 3,400 meters (11,200 ft)

Project Description

- Global special studies incorporated with SW 683 evaluation course
- Volunteered at and carried out evaluations tasks with agency called Manos Unidas
- Tasks included:
 - Key informant interviews with agency leaders and staff
 - Assisted in conducting focus group to evaluate effectiveness of agency
 - Participated in meetings to evaluate and improve upon effectiveness of volunteer program
 - Conducted observational studies of school and programs
 - Assisted teachers in the classroom setting with a functional skills group for youth with intellectual disabilities between the ages of 18-25







Lessons Learned

- Importance of introducing practices that have been found to be evidence-based in the United States into global communities in a way that is culturally sensitive and appropriate
- That building relationships and getting to know people, who they are, and their stories are key to development work



Advice

- Approach situations with a mindset of curiosity and willingness to learn
- Be open to trying new things. Put yourself out there, even thought it may not be easy

Strengths

- Is the only school in Cusco that has successfully helped students gain employment
- The only program in Cusco that allows for students with disabilities to be placed in public schools to learn with typically-developing peers
- Provides access to educational, functional, and vocational skills trainings for youth with disabilities
- Offers workshops to educate community members and combat myths and stereotypes
- Offers affordable education by accepting payments on sliding scale

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• In 2015, the Ministry of Health implemented new policies to support youth with disabilities to make them more of a priority

Opportunities

- Peru maintains an inclusion policy for youth with disabilities
- Enrollment for youth with disabilities into specialized schools has increased in recent years

Weaknesses

- Lack of specialized trainings required to provide safe, quality education and care
- Lack of communication between teachers and agency leaders regarding volunteer roles and responsibilities
- Lack of training for volunteers, visitors, and educators from other countries to enhance practices that are culturally competent and reflect cultural humility
- Challenges in integrating evidence-based practices with cultural differences
 Funding sources and volunteer program aren't sustainable

SWOT

Threats

- Myths and stereotypes held by Peruvians about people with disabilities
- Peru does not offer degrees for teachers to specialize or become trained in special education
- Only half of children with disabilities are enrolled in schools
- Facilities and education personnel are not equipped, prepared, or trained to work with children with disabilities

♦ "I got to know each child little by little. I learned that it is important to know how to work
with each child. Some kids need more care, love, and patience than others" Fabiola- lead
teacher with Pharawispa program





Acknowledgements

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Fraser, B. (2007). Earthquake highlights mental-health issues in Peru. *The Lancet*, *370*, 815-816. Retrieved from http://www.sciencedirect.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/science/article/pii/S0140673607613968