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Intermediate Student’s Book

Life

Peruvian weavers

**Part 1**

**00:17–00:52** In a small village, high in the Andes, it all starts with the sheep. Just one, that loses its warm winter wool. First, a few people from the village, or villagers, catch the sheep and prepare the knife. Then, they carefully tie up the sheep so that it can’t move. Finally, they use the knife to cut the sheep’s winter coat of wool.

**00:55–01:29** After that, one of the newest and most important industries in Chinchero begins. The methods they use are traditional, but these villagers are part of something new. The wool they’re collecting is for a new and different business, a weaver’s cooperative that the women here manage.

Every Monday and Saturday, 46 women and girls cut wool from their sheep and llamas. Then, they spin it into yarn for making cloth. Nilda Cayanupa is the leader for the Centre for Traditional Textiles, which manages the cooperative.

**01:30–01:45 Nilda** Any of my age in my town was learning to weave. So it was kind of sad that the weaving was disappearing. So, because that, always my dream was that the younger generation should learn so the weaving won’t die.

**01:46–01:52** Nilda grew up in the Andean countryside, where many of the men are farmers.

**01:55–02:06 Nilda** Chinchero is a farming village. We’re the best. I’m not saying this because I’m from this village – but we’re the best producers of the potatoes, and many beans like quinoa, barley …

**02:07–02:39** Farming has long been a tradition in Chinchero. Many farmers here continue the traditions of the Inca people who lived in the Andes for centuries. However, farming no longer brings in enough money to support a whole family here. So, with the changes in the economy, traditional ideas are changing too. Until now it’s always been the men who have farmed, and the women have cooked and cared for the children. They have also taken wool from the sheep and woven it into cloth. It’s this weaving that’s now becoming more and more important.

Life

**02:40–02:54** Nilda says that these women weavers are becoming the main economic supporters of the family. As an example, she tells of one woman whose husband has started helping with the sheep. She explains that this wasn’t very common in the past. Men only farmed the land and didn’t help with weaving.

**02:55–03:03 Nilda** But today, this group of ladies can make, not a lot of money, but a reasonable amount of money.

**03:04–03:21** Now in Chinchero, weaving isn’t just a tradition. It’s a way to make money and live well. Weaving has also become more important for the culture of Chinchero. It has become a way to make the textile tradition stronger and to keep a part of the past alive.

**03:23–03:31 Guadalupe** I learnt when I was in the third grade of school with very basic weaving. Today, I weave blankets, shawls, ponchos and prepare my own yarn.

**03:32–03:42** Older women now teach the younger girls. The goal is to bring back the strength of the textile tradition of the past. They want to keep the Peruvian weaving traditions alive.

**03:43–03:50** As the young women of Chinchero learn to weave, they also learn to be self-sufficient. They can sell the blankets and clothes that they make in their free time.

**03:52–03:58 Rosita** I do my weaving in house, in the afternoons and early morning. And here on Monday and Saturday too.

**04:00–04:13** Weaving groups like the Chinchero cooperative are giving new life to the textile tradition. In the end, their cooperative may prove that many threads together are stronger than one alone.