

One Thread Collective

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Impact Report

2025



One Thread
Collective

Dear Supporters,

One Thread Collective is coming up on our six year anniversary in June 2026! I've been reflecting on how many challenges we had to work through to get to where we are now. We answered this calling during a global pandemic with extremely limited resources, and in a particularly complicated region of Colombia that struggles with corruption, violence, chronic poverty, and water scarcity. Putting this report together, I'm so proud of what we've accomplished— and I'm clear that we couldn't have done it without you!

When co-founder Megan Battaglia and I decided to embark on this journey together with our partner in Colombia, Paula Restrepo, we started with just a couple thousand dollars from our savings. Megan and I worked multiple jobs, investing our extra money into the project and finally breaking even after two years. Then it took another 3 years for either of us to start receiving any compensation for our time! I kept telling myself, "If we build it, they will come." And they did, here you are.

It has not been an easy path to walk, but I'm not exaggerating when I say that my cup is overflowing. I wake up everyday feeling so much gratitude and purpose to the point that my work doesn't feel like work, and my partner has to force me to close my laptop.

I always wanted One Thread Collective to be a testimony to what is possible when just a few people pool their resources and dedication. This report is an invitation to look at what we have been able to do with very little money— what YOU have been able to do through your donations. After witnessing your impact, we hope you will consider deepening your support for our organization in the years ahead.

These are very heavy times we're living in— ICE raids, regime changes and wars funded with our tax dollars; climate catastrophe, biodiversity collapse, and our dwindling global water supply; division that has been seeded in every corner of the world... It's easy to mistakenly believe that we are powerless. But we are not, and we all have a part to play in cleaning up this mess.

If you've been thinking about getting more involved in the issues that are near to your heart, now is the time. There is truly no time to waste. We need you. **The world needs you.**

With love and gratitude,

Jackie Gilbert

Executive Director

Meet the Team



Jackie Gilbert
Co Founder & Director



Megan Battaglia
Co Founder



Paula Restrepo
Program Coordinator



Nicole Borboroglu
Assistant Director



Linnea Skinner
Intern



Rosa Carracedo
Quality Control Manager



Eleonora Montejo Lyall
Events & Outreach



Ashley Noroian
Intern

Board of Directors



Adriana Gutierrez



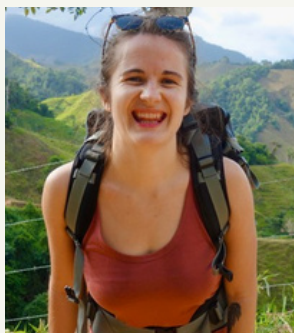
Caleigh Hernandez



Caroline MacDougall



Kate Johnstone



Lucy Gamble



Margaret Loncki

Our Artisan Leaders



Elsa Epieyu
Surrulat



Yamile Vangrieken
Ovejomana



Sara Ipuana
Tocoromana



Maribel Bouriyu
El Ahumao 1



Martha Bouriyu
El Ahumao 2



Adelaida Epinayu
El Ahumao 3



Elsa Ipuana
Kululumana 1



Olga Ipuana
Kululumana 2



Luz Maida Ipuana
Mouwasira



Gledys Granadillo
Hiotsy



Kelly Gonzalez
Juan y Medio



Yaniris Epieyu
Anerrutumana

Weaving possibilities into reality

OUR STORY

While working in La Guajira, Colombia in 2018 and 2019, co founders Jackie Gilbert and Megan Battaglia witnessed first-hand the many challenges Wayuu families face – food insecurity, water scarcity, corruption, state abandonment, displacement, environmental degradation, and climate change have all led to extreme poverty.

Despite all of the NGOs operating in La Guajira, the Wayuu families Jackie and Megan worked with seemed to be trapped in a constant state of emergency, not knowing how they would buy rice for their next meal. But one thing was very clear – **the women were devoted to giving their children a better future.**

These women were not interested in charity; rather, they wanted help with selling their handwoven mochilas. Inspired by the tenacity, artistry and entrepreneurial spirit of these women, Jackie and Megan joined forces with Paula Restrepo at Fundación Talento Colectivo, a La Guajira-based nonprofit that has provided training programs for Wayuu weavers for more than a decade.

Together, they made it their mission to create the most ethical and sustainable international mochila brand in the world!

What started as a small social enterprise has grown into a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization working to lift more than 100 families out of poverty while pioneering a new type of ethical fashion that goes far beyond fair trade.

OUR MISSION

One Thread Collective empowers Wayuu women weavers in La Guajira, Colombia with fair trade work, business skills, micro loans, and leadership opportunities to help them transcend poverty and build sustainable futures for their communities.

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

- Margaret Mead

THE NUMBERS

5+ years of social impact

109

full-day
workshops

66

interest-free
micro loans

58

women leaders
trained and
certified

consistent fair trade work for

160

at

7X

Wayuu women

the market rate

15

women who
went back to
school while
working with us

1,500

Wayuu beneficiaries

12

bank accounts
opened

3

community
projects launched

The Yala'yalaa School

for Women's Empowerment

The Yala'yalaa School is the cornerstone of our work in La Guajira. Yala'yalaa [pronounced ya-lie-ya-la] means brave, empowered, and strong in Wayuunaiki.

The school was originally founded by Paula Restrepo, founding director of our sister organization Fundación Talento Colectivo, and has been supported and expanded by One Thread Collective since 2022. Together we have held 109 empowering skill building workshops to date for the artisans in our collective.

In 2025, the Yala'yalaa School consisted of three 10-month courses, each offered to a different group of artisans based on their roles and experience:

1. Sustainable Community-Led Entrepreneurship

This foundational course supports artisans in becoming changemakers within their own communities. Participants learn how to identify challenges in their remote villages (e.g. food access or water security) and design sustainable solutions that improve quality of life for the entire community while generating income for women.

2. Advanced Leadership Workshops

This course is designed for the leaders of each of our 11 weaving teams. Each year, the curriculum evolves in response to their needs. In 2024, the focus was on ethical leadership, because in a region plagued by corruption, there are few examples of positive leadership. In 2025, the focus shifted to communication: how to communicate professionally with clients, how to navigate conflict within their weaving teams, and how to market their work through story telling and photography. The goal of this course is to equip them with transferable skills so they can work with any international client, leading their weaving teams independently.

3. Product Innovation & Cultural Design

This course marked a major evolution in our programming. For the first time, artisans were invited to step fully into the role of designer. Through a process similar to a fashion school, but rooted in Wayuu culture, artisans learned how to find inspiration in their communities, study patterns and symbols, explore color theory, sketch ideas, abstract designs onto graph paper, and translate those designs into woven form.

The Yala'yalaa School for Women's Empowerment is made possible entirely through donor support.

Monthly Highlights

JANUARY: Yamile registers for primary school!

Yamile Vangrieken, leader of our weaving team in Ovejomana, has been part of One Thread Collective since our founding in 2020.

She served as our first Cultural Liaison at the Yala'yalaa School, attending classes and reinforcing key concepts in Wayuunaiki for women who were less confident speaking Spanish.

After more than three years of working closely together, we offered Yamile a new role as our Quality Control Manager. She told us she couldn't accept the position, however, because she had never learned to read or write.

Recognizing her potential and her determination, our Instructor/Program Coordinator, Paula Restrepo, began offering Yamile one-on-one literacy classes. As Yamile's confidence grew, so did her aspirations.



In January, she made a life-changing decision to enroll in a six-year accelerated education program that combines primary school, middle school, and high school... at age 38! We are proud to pay for her education and excited to see where life takes her!

Dozen of women in our collective have invested in going back to school since joining One Thread Collective!

FEBRUARY: A New Classroom Space

In February, we took the first tangible step toward realizing a long-term community vision at La Cachaca, a semi-rural community located approximately 15 minutes from our office in Riohacha.



In 2024, we supported our partners at Fundación Talento Colectivo (FTC) in purchasing inexpensive, undeveloped land where we are helping them build a center for women's empowerment called **La Casa Colectiva**.

The construction of the outdoor classroom in 2025 was the first seed planted on the land. As funding allows, the center will grow to include:

- An artisan store where weavers can sell their handmade art to visitors
- A tech and study center with computers and internet access
- A permaculture garden and traditional restaurant employing Wayuu women
- A childcare space to allow women with young children to attend workshops
- Cabins to host volunteers and tourists

Please reach out to us if you would like to help us fund La Casa Colectiva!

FEBRUARY: Second Annual Solidarity Trip

February also marked our second annual Solidarity Trip to La Guajira, welcoming visitors from the United States, Mexico, and Colombia.

Thanks to a generous sponsorship from the Center for Radical Futures, we were able to bring esteemed photographer Roberta Marroquín to document our work and capture the beauty of the communities we serve.

Over the course of the 8-day trip, participants visited our community projects, took part in a weaving workshop, toured a flamingo reserve, spent two nights in hammocks in a Wayuu community, and attended the first Yala'yalaa School workshop of the year held in the new outdoor classroom at La Cachaca.

These trips are designed not as tours, but as opportunities for mutual learning and cross cultural solidarity.

Get in touch with us if you're interested in joining one of our upcoming Solidarity Trips!



“Unity Store” Launch in Ovejomana

During our community stay, we also supported the women of Ovejomana in launching their **community-led grocery co-op**, an idea proposed by the artisans themselves, and funded by One Thread Collective.

We supplied building materials and food for a **Yammana**, a traditional Wayuu community work day in the which women prepare a feast while the men collaborate on a construction project. This is the customary way homes and shared infrastructure are built in Wayuu communities.

Once construction was complete, we stocked the store with essential staples such as rice, corn, flour, and coffee. We also provided practical training on using calculators and scales, managing a work schedule, and tracking sales.

The grocery co-op now helps families access affordable food locally while creating income-generating & leadership opportunities for women. The store also eliminates the small plastic rice bags brought from the city that litter the community, since customers bring their own containers!



MARCH: New Design & Innovation Course



In early March, we launched our third course at the Yala'yalaa School for Women's Empowerment: **Product Innovation & Cultural Design**.

Artisans learned how to find inspiration in their remote communities, observed patterns in daily life and nature, explored color theory, sketched ideas, translated symbols onto graph paper, and brought their designs to life with crochet needles. Each piece became a visual story of their identity, ancestral memory, and life in the *ranchería*.

While this course was not directly tied to infrastructure or community development, it may be one of the most transformative initiatives we have ever undertaken during our 5+ years as an organization.

The ten artisans on the innovation team underwent a profound shift. Each was invited to dig deep into her cultural roots and reflect on her identity as a weaver. Throughout the course, their technical skills deepened, but more importantly, their confidence emerged. We watched them step fully into their roles not just as artisans, but as designers and artists in their own right.

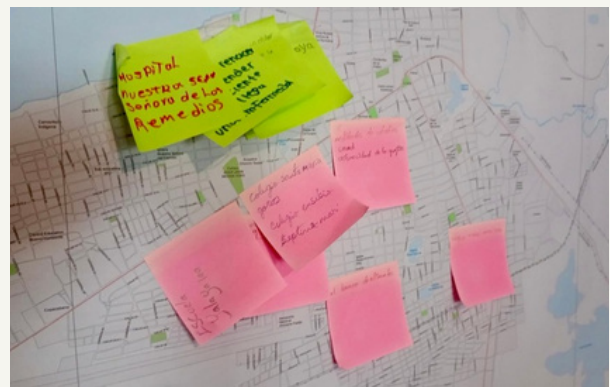
This course marked a meaningful step toward decolonizing fashion. Rather than replicating the typical brand–artisan dynamic where outside designers dictate aesthetics and the artisans reproduce them, **this model centers creative authorship within the community.**

APRIL: Training on Colombia's "Care Policy"

In April we hosted a workshop with a representative from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) focused on Colombia's *Política Nacional del Cuidado*, a national framework that recognizes caregiving as essential labor and addresses the disproportionate burden of unpaid care work carried primarily by women.

During the session, artisan leaders learned how the care policy is being implemented in Riohacha, La Guajira, and participated in a city-wide mapping exercise, identifying health centers, emergency services, and public institutions available to women and families in times of need.

The artisans also completed surveys led by UNDP and Colombia's Ministry of Equality and Equity to help identify the specific needs of women caregivers in the region. This data contributes to shaping local and national strategies that better reflect the realities of women in semi-rural and Indigenous communities.



We also sponsored our Program Coordinator, Paula, our Quality Control Manager, Rosa, and two of our artisan leaders, Yamile and Elsitá, to participate in a certification process connected to the National Care System.

Through this process, they were formally trained and recognized as mothers and community caregivers within Colombia's public framework, opening doors to future opportunities, and institutional support.

MAY: Aniwa Gathering



In May we participated in Aniwa for the second year in a row, an annual gathering of more than 40 Indigenous elders from around the world for four days of ceremony and cultural exchange. This year Aniwa was held in Pomo territory in Northern CA at a property called Camp Navarro.

This is one of our favorite events of the year. Imagine a music festival setting with multiple stages and activities happening all throughout the day, but instead of bands there are elders giving educational lectures and holding immersive rituals like tobacco ceremonies, sweat lodges, and drum circles.

We are honored that during both years, we have had many Indigenous folks (particularly from the Amazon) come to our booth to purchase our bags and learn about our work!

The 2026 Aniwa Gathering will take place Thursday, June 25th to Sunday, June 28th. We hope to see you there!



JULY: International Folk Arts Market

In July, Jackie, Paula, and Nicole joined 150 artists from over 60 countries at the 21st International Folk Art Market in Santa Fe, New Mexico, one of the world's most prestigious platforms for traditional and contemporary folk art.

With a formal support letter from IFAM, we were able to help Paula secure a U.S. visa valid for ten years!

This opens significant doors for international collaboration and the long-term growth of Paula's organization, Fundación Talento Colectivo.



At the market, **our bags and accessories were so well received that we nearly sold out on the second day!** In a moment that perfectly captured the spirit of the collective effort behind this work, Dream Weaver Jill Critelli agreed to fly out at 6:00 a.m. to Santa Fe for day three with a suitcase full of mochilas to get us through the second half of the event!



AUGUST: Reproductive Health Program

In August, Nicole returned to La Guajira with Paula González, a Master's student in Public Health at UC Santa Barbara, to begin **preliminary research for a reproductive health education program we're planning for 2026.**

The visit focused on building relationships, introducing Paula to the artisans and One Thread Collective staff, and listening closely to the needs expressed by women in our communities.

Together, they facilitated focus groups with artisans to gather baseline data that will inform the design of a culturally appropriate curriculum based on the artisans' existing knowledge and priorities. **This initiative was requested by women in our collective, many of whom have voiced concern about unwanted pregnancy, particularly among adolescents.**



By grounding this work in community input from the outset, we aim to co-create an education program that supports informed decision-making and health autonomy.

We look forward to sharing the research findings with our community in the year ahead.

SEPTEMBER: Dance Therapy Workshop



As part of our ongoing efforts to inspire holistic wellbeing for Wayuu women, we hosted a dance therapy workshop at the Yala'yalaa School facilitated by **dance therapist Pamela Guzmán.**



First, the artisans taught Pamela how to dance the Yonna, a traditional dance performed during a Wayuu women's most important life transitions (e.g. first menstruation, marriage, graduation). Then the artisans were invited to move, sing, and connect with their bodies.



Together they translated traditional medicine songs to Wayuunaiki, a deeply impactful experience for the women.



Empowerment is not only built through skills and strategy, but also through joy, embodiment, and cultural exchange in spaces where women feel safe to express and heal together. We are grateful for Paula's multidisciplinary approach.

OCTOBER: Color Theory & Photography

We are deeply committed to transferring practical, market-relevant skills that expand opportunity for women beyond our organization. The end goal is economic autonomy. To achieve this, the artisans need to feel confident in their ability to work with international clients, which requires cultivating basic skills in design and marketing.

In October, we asked designer and photographer Adriana Botero (who first joined us in La Guajira during our March 2025 Solidarity Trip) to lead two hands-on workshops for the artisans: Color Theory and Photography.

In the photography workshop, the leaders of each weaving team learned how to use smartphone cameras, style their bags for presentation, and take compelling portrait photographs.

The Color Theory workshop for our Innovation Team introduced the use of a color wheel as a creative tool. Artisans experimented with tone, contrast, and harmony, deepening their ability to develop intentional color palettes for future designs.



NOVEMBER: Community Project Presentations

During the final class of the year for our **Sustainable Community-Led Entrepreneurship Course**, we met with each artisan via zoom to hear them present the community project ideas they have been developing throughout the year with Paula's guidance. Based on this meeting, we outlined three priorities for 2026:

CLEAN WATER:

Water tanks, cisterns, and filters to improve access to safe drinking water; educational workshops on water care and hygiene

COMMUNITY GARDENS:

Reviving traditional farming practices with garden kits and hands-on workshops with Wayuu experts

SUPPORT FOR WAYUU YOUTH:

A safe space for youth ages 15–21 to reconnect with their weaving tradition, receive academic & career advice, and attend mental health & life skills workshops while saving money for school



Since 2020 we have been setting aside money from each bag sale to fund community-led projects, prioritizing regenerative models that provide income for women while improving quality of life for the entire community.

DECEMBER: Graduation

The Yala'yalaa School Graduation is the most special day of the year for the artisans in our collective.

In 2025 we had 31 Wayuu women graduate from our three courses—our biggest cohort of graduates yet! For many of them, it was their first time taking a course or receiving a diploma.

Paula planned a truly gorgeous ceremony with speeches from each artisan leader, an intention setting exercise, prayers and blessings on the beach, dance therapy with Pamela Guzmán, and a delicious lunch.

Check out this beautiful video of the graduation ceremony:

youtube.com/watch?v=FZA4QVTIJq4



DECEMBER 12: Regenerative Runway

Our biggest event to date, the Regenerative Runway at the Dos Pueblos Orchid Farm in Goleta, CA showcased our new collection of mochilas designed in our innovation workshops. The bags were modeled by nonprofit leaders including our very own Paula Restrepo, and activists, philanthropists and icons like Alice Waters and Penny Livingston. **This gorgeous event would not have been possible without our Visionary Sponsor, Belle Hahn.** Check out our [video recap](#) of the event.





THANK YOU

for powering lasting change.

