

# REVITALIZING THE THREADS OF HERITAGE

THE ROLE OF PUBLIC  
RELATIONS IN PROMOTING  
MAYAN INTANGIBLE  
CULTURAL HERITAGE

MA. ANA PAULA MIRANDA 12 NOV



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01



# MAYA K'ICHE' WEAVING TRADITION



# Maya K'iche' weaving tradition

**In Guatemala is a deeply cultural and ancestral practice, centered on the use of the backstrap loom and a rich vocabulary of symbolism.**

This tradition produces iconic garments like the huipil (blouse), which often incorporates designs unique to each community or even personal nahual symbols.

# Key aspects of K'iche' weaving

## Technique:

The backstrap loom is the traditional tool, a portable loom where the weaver ties the threads to a back strap and a stationary object, using their body to create tension.

# Key aspects of K'iche' weaving

## Garments:

- **Huipil:** The hand-woven blouse is a central piece. It is often made from three panels (a front, center, and back) that are sewn together.
- **Corte:** A long, wrapped skirt.
- **Faja:** A woven belt used to hold up the “corte”.
- **Tzute:** A versatile square of cloth used for carrying items, covering the head, or as a decorative piece.

# Key aspects of K'iche' weaving

## Symbolism and Identity:

- **Community identity:** Each community has distinct patterns, colors, and motifs that identify its members.
- **Personal identity:** Designs can represent the weaver's life, family history, or community traditions.
- **Spiritual significance:** The practice is sacred, linked to the goddess Ixchel, the goddess of the moon, fertility, and weaving, whom weavers may invoke for blessings.
- **Nahual:** A protective spiritual being associated with each person can be incorporated into the design as a powerful symbol.

# Key aspects of K'iche' weaving

## Process:

- **Labor-intensive:** Creating a single huipil can take months, with the intricate designs and careful work taking up to 10 months for skilled weavers.
- **Dyeing:** A crucial step involves using dyes to create patterns, a process that requires meticulous planning to ensure colors are layered correctly.
- **Skill:** Weaving a huipil or other garment is a testament to the weaver's skill, with the precise alignment of patterns across the multiple panels a mark of their talent.

02



# HOW PR TECHNIQUES AMPLIFIES INDIGENOUS VOICES



# How PR techniques amplifies indigenous voices

## Ethical Storytelling and Content Creation

- **Elevate Weaver Voices**
- **Educational Outreach**
- **Frame the tradition not just as "preservation" but as a dynamic, living art of form.**

This is the foundation for all communication, ensuring that the story of the textiles is told by, and for the benefit of the K'iche' people.

# How PR techniques amplifies indigenous voices

## Digital Engagement and E-Commerce

- **Direct-to-Consumer Digital Platforms**
- **Virtual Cultural Exchange**
- **Partner with ethical fashion advocates, cultural journalists, and slow-living influencers**

Leveraging technology to expand market reach while maintaining cultural control.

# How PR techniques amplifies indigenous voices

## Strategic and Ethical Collaborations

- **Co-Creation Models and Ethical Fashion Partnerships**
- **Tourism PR for Cultural Immersion**

Creating visibility and modern relevance through carefully chosen partnerships.

# How PR techniques amplifies indigenous voices

## Advocacy and Intellectual Property PR

- Support for Collective Intellectual Property
- Branding for Authenticity

Using PR to generate support for legal and policy protection of cultural expressions.

# 03

## » CASE 1



# @tramatextiles instagram campaign

## Media strategy

- Daily storytelling posts about individual weavers and their personal histories.
- Educational content about the symbolism of traditional motifs and weaving techniques.
- Influencer collaborations with ethical fashion bloggers.
- **Support for Collective Intellectual Property**

Trama Textiles, a women's weaving cooperative based in the Western Highlands of Guatemala (including K'iche' communities), uses Instagram to share weavers' stories and promote their textiles globally.



Video: Episode Two: Telar de Cintura (Backstrap Weaving) with Trama Textiles Guatemala /  
YouTube channel Trama Textiles

# @tramatextiles instagram campaign

## Impact

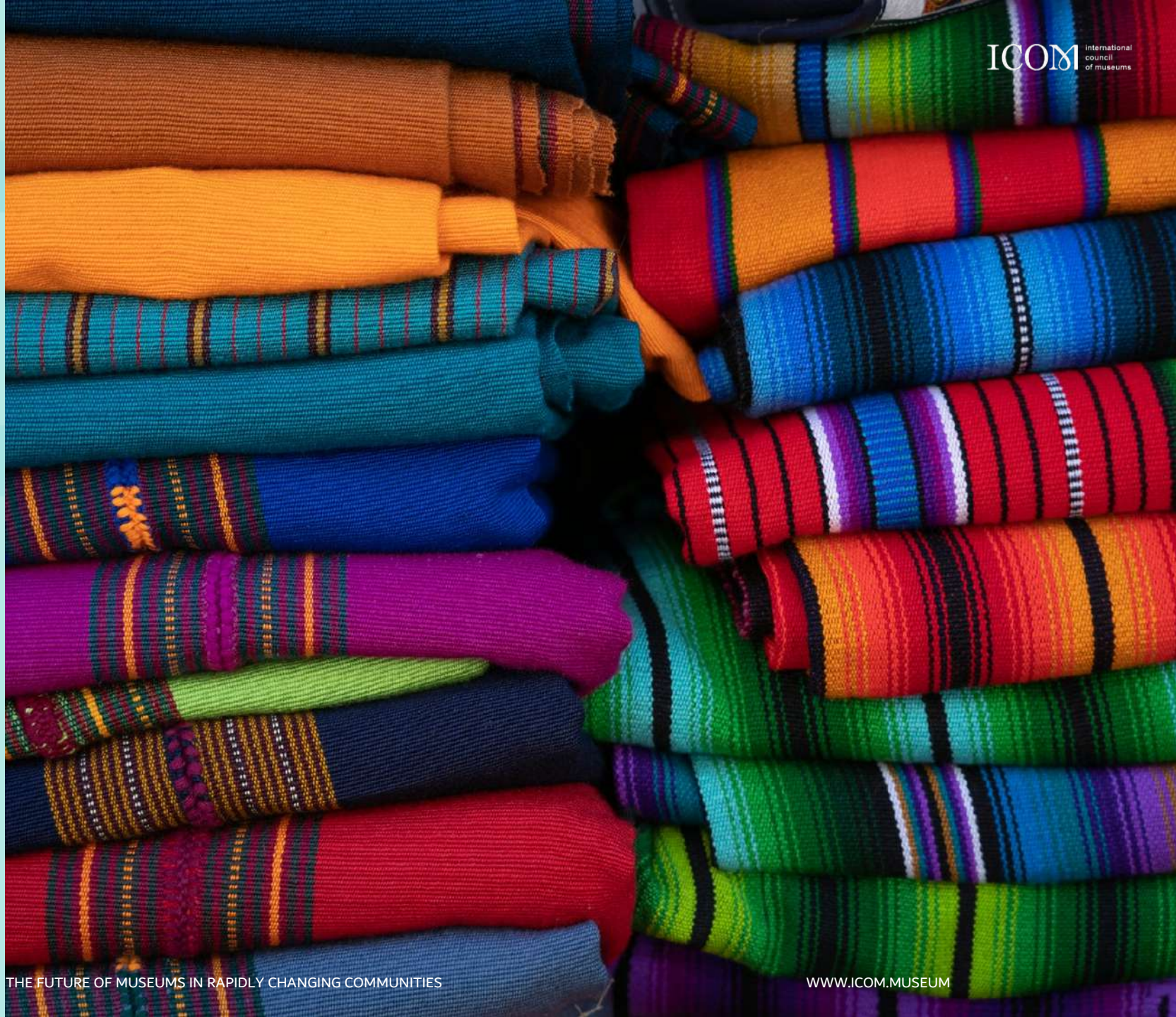
- Grew followers by 300% between 2020–2023.
- Boosted international sales by 40%, directly increasing income for over 400 women.
- Raised awareness about cultural appropriation and promoted fair trade practices.

Trama Textiles, a women's weaving cooperative based in the Western Highlands of Guatemala (including K'iche' communities), uses Instagram to share weavers' stories and promote their textiles globally.

# 04



## CASE 2

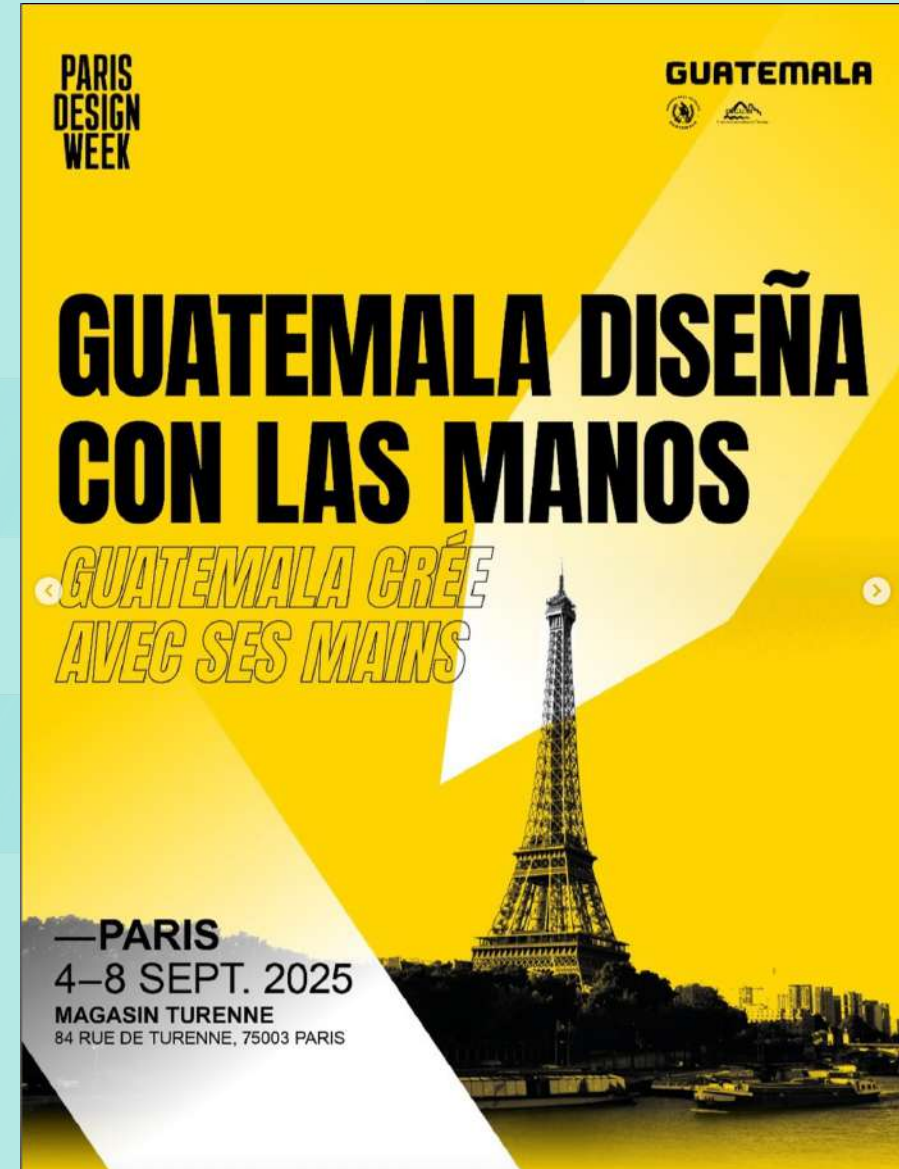


# INGUAT's "Guatemala Diseña con las manos" Campaign

**Project that bring together designers and Guatemalan artisans to explore the fusion of contemporary design and ancestral techniques. The showcase aims to demonstrate design's transformative potential in responding to the challenges of modern society.**

Video: Guatemala presents to the world a unique fusion of tradition, design and art in Paris. / YouTube channel of INGUAT

Image: Instagram Studio Calido



# INGUAT's "Guatemala Diseña con las manos" Campaign

## Media strategy

- Storytelling & visual narrative
- Social media outreach
- Influencer & NGO collaboration
- Ethical marketing & community participation

# INGUAT's "Guatemala Diseña con las manos" Campaign

## Impact

- Economic empowerment of weavers
- Cultural pride & youth involvement
- International visibility & tourism interest

# 05

## » CASE 3



## MUSEO IXCHEL

**Tells the story of the textile tradition found in Mayan weaving that date back over thousands of years.**

Source: [museoixchel.org](https://museoixchel.org)



Image: <https://museoixchel.org/en/the-threads-tell-a-story/>

# MUSEO IXCHEL

## Media strategy

- Leveraging Storytelling and Narrative Marketing
- Digital Presence & Virtual Engagement
- Collaborations with Local Weavers
- Workshops and Demonstrations



the shape or the design of the huipil is the same.

Video:: The Heart of the Museum: A Virtual Tour inside the Collection Room by Violeta Gutiérrez / YouTube Channel Museo Ixchel



Image:: Instagram publication Museo Ixchel

# MUSEO IXCHEL

## Impact

- Interactions across its digital platforms.
- Influenced international institutions to consider stronger heritage protection for indigenous textiles.
- Elevated the status of Mayan weaving from “craft” to recognized cultural heritage.

# 06



## CONCLUSIONS



Exhibition of Angelica Serech at  
La Rebelde Art Gallery.

# Conclusions

- Through targeted PR campaigns, the Mayan weaving tradition can be revitalized, empowering local communities while engaging global audiences.
- The challenges of authentic representation and the importance of collaboration with local communities to avoid commodification.
- By strategically utilizing PR tools, is how cultural heritage can evolve as a dynamic, living tradition while safeguarding its authenticity.
- PR as a transformative force that not only preserves intangible heritage but also reinvigorates it, fostering both local pride and global appreciation in the 21st century.

# THANK YOU

## Revitalizing the Threads of Heritage

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