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## MY FIRST TEJIDO

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I still remember fondly how I started learning the art of weaving at home, with all of my sisters and my grandmother as a teacher. In the beginning my sisters and I started by helping to roll up thread into a ball, making tramador (adding thread outside a bamboo stick), while we were doing that, we learned the art of weaving by watching our grandmother weave. After a while, I started making bracelets of three threads, that consisted in tying vertical threads onto a nail and attaching it to our faja (belt) and passing a piece of thread horizontally by following the pattern of two up-one under and two down-one up, then repeating the process. After years of helping my grandmother and making lots of bracelets, I kept insisting for her to teach me how to weave bigger looms. One early morning, my grandma gathered all of my favorite colors into a basket and told me “you are ready!” When I realized that I was going to start weaving, I was so excited I couldn’t stop asking the same questions repeatedly, just to make sure I didn’t miss any detail.

She started to make a small urdido (a bundle of vertical threads that are the base of the loom). The urdido was small, it had colors like red, blue, green and yellow. She also got me a mecapal, which goes around the waist to keep the one end of the loom in front of me. My needle was made out of animal bone and my petate, a plant-based rug hand made by my grandfather.

She set it up for me and tied it on the same orange tree in the yard, where she had hers on too, so we could work together and guide me when needed. We had the small basket between the two of us, with multiple balls of threads of multiple colors. Our weaving sessions would go from sunrise to sunset. To pass the time, she sang, and frequently shared memories of when she started weaving too.

After a few weeks of hard work, I had completed my first tejido! It had lots of colors, like shades of purple, red, yellows and oranges. It also had designs like pepitas (inspired by sunflower seeds), tinajitas (inspired by containers we used to carry water), and flowers, inspired by the nature.

My grandmother and I were very proud of the finished product, that she showed it to the rest of my family, her friends and neighbors. Even though my tejido had a lot of mistakes it was something I had accomplished that I had completed with my grandmother’s help.

What I learned from this experience is that we leave a part of us in every tejido we make, because we choose the colors based on our emotions and how we are feeling, we also get inspiration by what surrounds us. For instance, my first tejido was bright, colorful and the designs I chose, reflected my excitement. It was not perfect, but every mistake I made, made my tejido unique.