For five years USU students have been teaming up with a Peruvian agricultural company to help entrepreneurs launch new ventures. The firm's successful work is not going unnoticed; in fact, the company has just received national recognition for the good it has accomplished.

The company, DanPer, won the PERU 2021 Social Responsibility and Sustainable Development Award last year. PERU 2021 is a nonprofit organization that promotes corporate social responsibility and enterprises that stimulate economic change. DanPer, in partnership with USU, won first place in the category “workers.” The organization recognized DanPer “for its successful sustainable business ventures, developed to improve the quality of life for entrepreneurs without access to credit.” It was also recognized for providing the teaching of business basics and financing the deserving entrepreneurs’ ventures.

The Small Enterprise Education and Development (SEED) program gives USU students a hands-on learning experience and the opportunity to teach business basics to those who come seeking assistance. SEED also administers small loans to qualifying entrepreneurs who are funded mostly by money raised by USU students, said David Herrmann, the SEED program director.

The relationship between the Huntsman School SEED program and DanPer was formed years ago when students were visiting the agricultural company on a study abroad trip. Mr. Herrmann had the idea of starting a small loan program in different countries that students could help direct.

DanPer had previously implemented an aggressive social improvement agenda for its employees, but the one thing it lacked was the small loans and education program that the Huntsman School could provide.
Through the years, this relationship has flourished. DanPer lets USU students use its facility for teaching classes, as well as for helping the students find competent and deserving participants for the program. The company has a full-time employee assigned to the program who collects payments on the loans and is a consistent colleague for the students rotating through every three months.

“It is a very exciting acknowledgment of all of the work and effort that the school has put into the program, and particularly all the student interns who have served in that program for the last five years,” Mr. Herrmann said.