

INTERCULTURAL MEDICINE CLINIC PROJECT:

THE USE OF CULTURALLY-ADAPTED ENTHEOGENIC
MEDICINES TO TREAT SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS AND
OTHER MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES IN THE YAQUI TRIBE.

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SPEAKER DISCLOSURE

I have been informed of the responsibility to disclose to the audience if I will be discussing off-label or investigational use(s) of drugs, products, and/or devices (any use not approved by the US Food and Drug Administration).

– The use of psychedelics for the treatment of any psychiatric disorder is offlabel/
investigational.

Financial Relationships

The speaker has a scholarship from the George Sarlo Foundation and Usona Institute for her graduate studies.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. To learn about efforts in Mexico to establish the first Intercultural Medicine Clinic where indigenous people's mental health concerns are addressed using culturally-adapted entheogenic medicine treatments, within the framework of inter-tribal alliances.
2. To learn about a practical example where accessibility of psychedelic-assisted therapy to indigenous peoples is the primary objective.
3. To learn how psychedelic treatments are being integrated into the national mental health system in Mexico.
4. To learn about a research project for evaluating the efficacy and safety of psychedelic-supported psychotherapy in a naturalistic setting as proposed by EnTOP (Entheogenic Treatment Outcome Project).





1) BACKGROUND



2) INTERCULTURAL
MEDICINE CLINIC



3) ENTOP PROTOCOL



4) CONSERVATION
PROJECTS

OUTLINE

BACKGROUND

The Yaqui tribe

The Yaqui, or Yoeme, as they call themselves are one of eight indigenous tribes in Sonora, Mexico – 40,000 Yaqui in 8 towns.

- They are settled in what is known as “Valle del Rio Yaqui”, which comprises some of the most fertile and fought over lands in Sonora
- Yaqui identity is profoundly place-based, inextricably connected to the Rio Yaqui, and intimately linked to oral stories and dance rituals, which are important embodied elements of their epistemology, mythology and cosmology
- Since the arrival of the Spanish in 1533 they have been fierce and rightful defenders of their territory and water
- The fight for their water continues until today
- Given the centuries’ old fight to secure their livelihood and way of life, it is no surprise that many Yaqui are currently struggling with substance use disorders and other mental health challenges



BACKGROUND

Overview of their struggle for water

Here is a two-minute video that will paint a picture of what their historic struggle has been, and what their current fight is.

As you will see, the construction and illegal operation of “Acueducto Independencia” is deviating water from Yaqui communities to the capital of the state, Hermosillo to be used by corporations like Coca Cola and Heineken.

Yaqui leaders and activists have strongly mobilized to defend their water in a unified way.

As a result of their activism, they have been imprisoned and suffered a series of attacks.

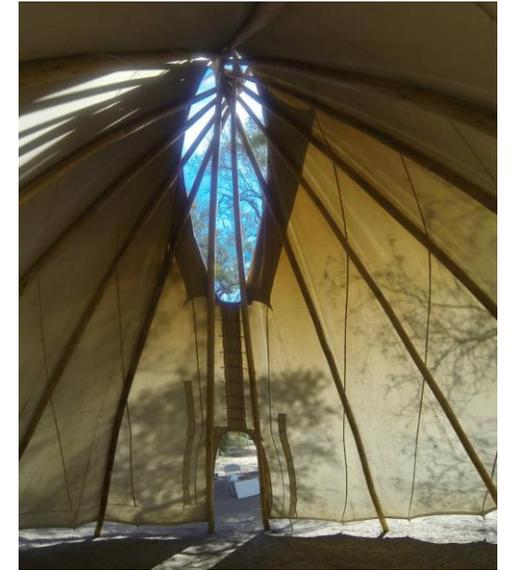
BACKGROUND

Yaqui leaders believe that methamphetamine was deliberately introduced into their communities to weaken their well-organized activism and divide them.

Methamphetamine use has caused physical, mental and emotional deterioration, and fostered an increase in intra-family and community violence.

To address this problem, in 2014 Yaqui tribe leader, activist, and psychologist Anahí Ochoa, with the support of Nierika AC, organized a series of intercultural medicine workshops in Yaqui territory.

The positive results of these integrated medicine workshops sparked the idea of establishing a permanent clinic in Yaqui territory.

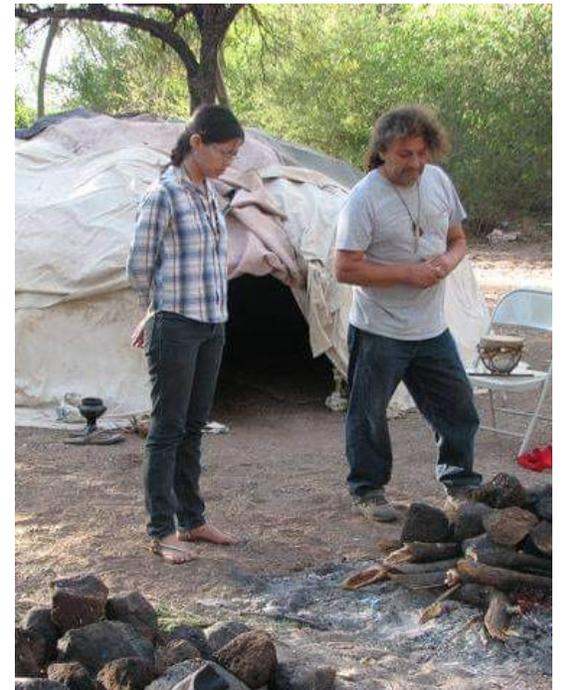


BACKGROUND

Objective: Establish an Intercultural Medicine Clinic where treatment, addiction prevention, and mental health pilot program are developed and implemented, in collaboration with researchers, specialists, and traditional medicine men and women from various indigenous cultures, AND under the auspices of Mexico's Public Health department through the National Council on Mental Health and Addictions.

Some of the activities that we are integrating into the treatment protocols of the clinic are:

- Prehispanic temazcal (sweat lodge)
- Ayahuasca ceremonies
- Peyote ceremonies
- Ethical and responsible use of 5-MeO-DMT derived from *Incilius alvarius* (**eventually**)*
- Individual, group and family psychotherapy
- Cultural activities to strengthen Yaqui identity as a therapeutic strategy



INTERCULTURAL MEDICINE CLINIC

Timeline of key events

2013-2015 – Nierika AC brings members from the NAC and representatives from the Wixarika tribe to Yaqui territory for first inter-tribal encounters and Peyote ceremonies to treat members of the community who were addicted to methamphetamine

2016 – 2017 – Legal defense against gas pipeline that was going to be cutting right through Yaqui territory led to significant community division and violence

2018 – Yaqui leaders approach the federal government to request CISAME

2020 – Yaqui Traditional Authorities from Vicam begin conversations with the Sonora state department of public health for the establishment of an Intercultural Medicine Clinic instead of the CISAME so that treatments may be more culturally-sensitive and adapted to Yaqui cosmovision



CISAME
CENTROS INTEGRALES
DE SALUD MENTAL



INTERCULTURAL MEDICINE CLINIC

Timeline of key events

February – March 2020 – First meeting with Sonora state department of public health and general direction of mental health and addictions, we were asked to write a proposal for the clinic

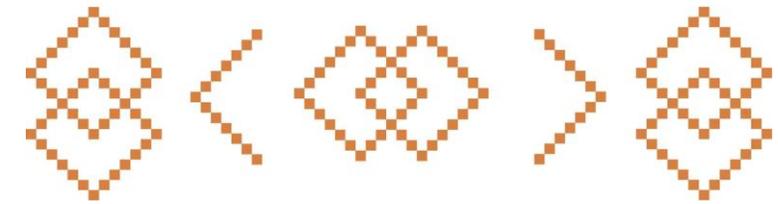
April – August 2020 – prepared proposal to present to Sonora's state Department of Public Health, then to federal authorities of National Council on Mental Health and Addictions

September 2020 – presented clinic proposal to Riverstyx Foundation, a non-profit organization that provides funding and programmatic assistance to under-represented peoples, projects, and organizations

October 2020 – Mexico's president commits to support the establishment of the IMC as part of the Restorative justice plan (*"Plan de Justicia para el pueblo Yaqui"*) that he is enacting to apologize and compensate for the abuses the Yaqui tribe have suffered for centuries



DIRECCIÓN GENERAL DE SALUD MENTAL Y ADICCIONES



INTERCULTURAL MEDICINE CLINIC

Timeline of key events

February 2021 – state and federal government representatives meet with the Yaqui clinical team and the technical support team from Nierika AC on-site of the future clinic in Yaqui territory

March 2021 – both the federal Department of Public Health through CONASAMA and Riverstyx foundation commit to support the IMC project

April 2021 – Yaqui – Huni Kuin inter-tribal encounter at Nierika AC center. Training of the Yaqui clinical team for the culturally-adapted treatments was started with the support of Limina Foundation

May – August 2021 – International research team assembled for EnTOP

September 2021 – First visit of the Huni Kuin from Brazil to Torim, Sonora for first ayahuasca ceremony treatment at the clinic

October 2021 – NAC and Navajo tribe members come to Torim and facilitate our second ceremony treatment with Peyote.



INTERCULTURAL MEDICINE CLINIC

The clinic gets launched with the support of Yaqui Traditional Authorities and Riverstyx foundation

September 2021 – Huni Kuin go to Yaqui territory

Patients with either methamphetamine use disorder, alcohol use disorder, depression or anxiety participate in ayahuasca and kambo ceremonies, along with preparation and integration sessions, as well as weekly temazcal (sweat lodge)

October 2021 – NAC members from the Lakota and Navajo tribes go to Yaqui territory

Patients participate in a Peyote ceremony with members from the NAC





INTERCULTURAL MEDICINE CLINIC

Huni Kuin tribe visit to Yaqui territory –
September 2021



INTERCULTURAL MEDICINE CLINIC

Huni Kuin tribe visit to Yaqui territory –
September 2021



INTERCULTURAL MEDICINE CLINIC

NAC members visit to Yaqui territory –
October 2021

INTERCULTURAL MEDICINE CLINIC

Interdisciplinary team

The clinic project is staffed by an indigenous clinical team (psychotherapists, social worker, Yaqui traditional medicine woman, and Mayo traditional medicine man), and backed up by an interdisciplinary team of clinicians, researchers, traditional medicine men and women, and a western medical team (psychiatrist, general practitioner doctor and nurse).

At this point, the clinic is offering outpatient services, but will eventually transition to being able to offer residential treatment care.

We are currently operating out of a community health center in the Yaqui town of Torim, where besides the integrative addiction treatment services, we are also offering general medical care to the community at large.

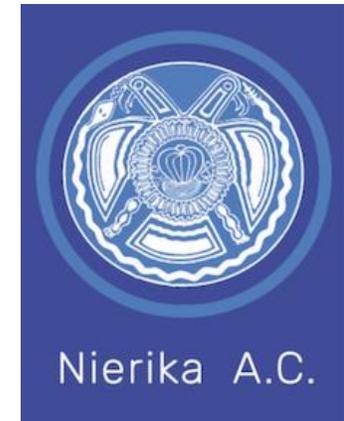
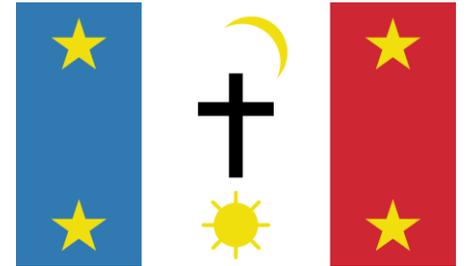


INTERCULTURAL MEDICINE CLINIC

Interorganizational support

It is important to note that this work is embedded within a mental health research project where we will be evaluating the safety and efficacy of indigenous treatments complemented by psychotherapy for, and by indigenous peoples with various entheogenic medicines, and with extensive support from both the public and private sectors in Mexico and internationally.

- Full support from Traditional Authorities and community members of the Yaqui tribe
- Executive support through Mexico's president Restorative justice plan
- Support from Public Health department – state and federal levels
- Support from non-profit organizations, i.e., Riverstyx Foundation, Limina Foundation, Femtheogen collaborative, etc.
- Support from an international research team through EnTOP
- Advised and supervised by Nierika AC



ENTHEOGENIC TREATMENT OUTCOME PROJECT

International research team

As a continuation to the “Ayahuasca Treatment Outcome Project” (ATOP)¹, which is a multi-site, naturalistic, mixed-methods investigation of substance abuse treatment programs that use Ayahuasca as part of their treatment model, some of the team members of ATOP have come together to launch the “Entheogenic Treatment Outcome Project” (EnTOP).

The goal of EnTOP is to evaluate the efficacy and safety of entheogens of natural origin in naturalistic settings in different countries with similar research instruments and similar research design

Entheogenic medicines include Ayahuasca, Peyote, Psilocybe mushrooms, and eventually, toad-derived 5-MeO-DMT

Clinical indications included are SUD's, depression, anxiety, PTSD and difficult grief

Quantitative instruments to be used are still being decided upon



Protocol for Outcome Evaluation of Ayahuasca-Assisted Addiction Treatment: The Case of Takiwasi Center

Brian Rush^{1*}, Olivia Marcus², Sara Garcia³, Anja Loizaga-Velder⁴, Gabriel Loewinger⁵, Ariane Spitalier⁵ and Fernando Mendive³

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ENTHEOGENIC TREATMENT OUTCOME PROJECT

EnTOP primary objective

To measure whether participation in ritual practices with entheogens as an adjunct to psychotherapeutic processes:

- Contributes to abstinence from the use of addictive psychoactive substances
- Decreases cravings and reduces withdrawal syndromes
- Decreases clinical symptoms of depression and PTSD
- It is safe within contexts of exclusion/inclusion criteria for contraindications

Secondary objectives:

To measure whether participation in entheogenic medicine sessions:

- Improves biopsychosocial health, quality of life and well-being of patients
- Strengthens the sense of cultural identity and associated sociocultural aspects
- Contributes to patients' motivation to treatment and satisfaction in their therapeutic process



ENTHEOGENIC TREATMENT OUTCOME PROJECT

EnTOP International research team

Dr. Anja Loizaga-Velder, Nierika A.C. – Mexico

Dr. Brian Rush, Center for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) – Canada

Dr. Gabrielle Agin-Liebes, University of California San Francisco (UCSF) – US

Dr. Gady Zabicky, National Commission Against Addictions (CONADIC) – Mexico



CONSERVATION PROJECTS

The Sonoran Desert toad (*Incilius alvarius*) and 5-MeO-DMT

The huge rise in popularity of 5-MeO-DMT extracted from this toad over the past 10 years has placed the species in an ecological uncertain situation.

- Toad population study to update its classification in the IUCN Red list
- Habitat and ecological landscape restoration in Yaqui territory
- Conservation campaign in Sonora

Peyote conservation

We are also in ongoing conversations with representatives from the Indigenous Peyote Conservation Initiative to see if we can launch a Peyote conservation program as part of the IMC in Yaqui territory.



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Nierika AC team: Anja Loizaga-Velder, PhD, Armando Loizaga Pazzi and Lucio Arredondo

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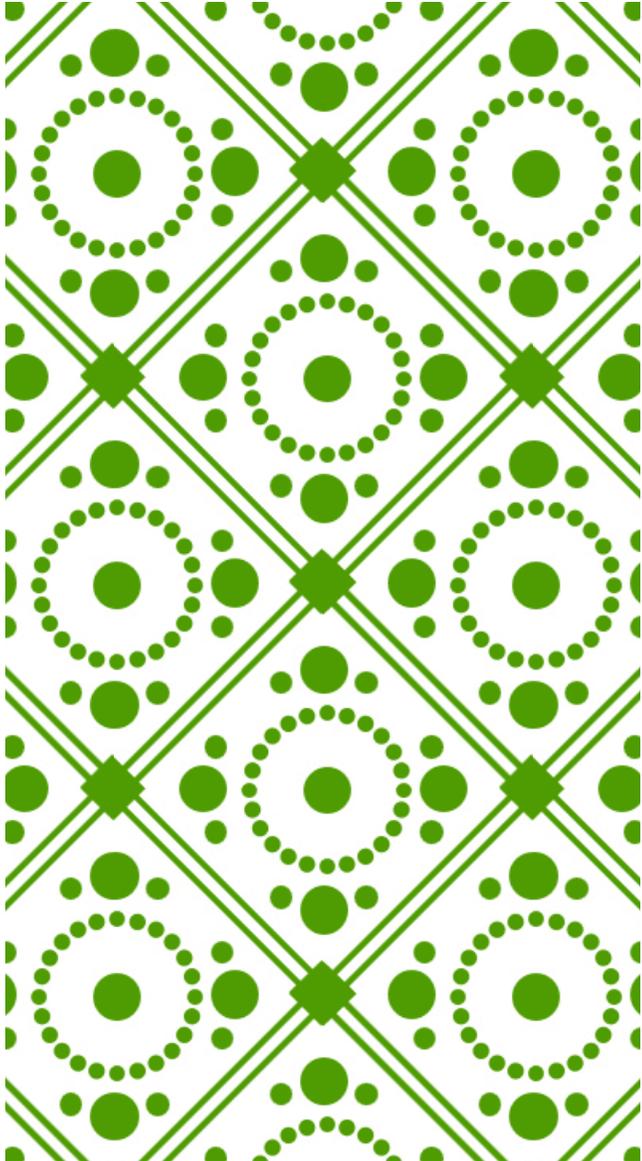


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L I M I N A
F O U N D A T I O N





Thank you.

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REFERENCES

Rush, B., Marcus, O., García, S., Loizaga-Velder, A., Loewinger, G., Spitalier, A., & Mendive, F. (2021). Protocol for Outcome Evaluation of Ayahuasca-Assisted Addiction Treatment: The Case of Takiwasi Center. *Frontiers in Pharmacology*, 12, 659644.