



January 9, 2015

Dear members of ayahuasca drinking communities:

The main purpose of the ESC is to engage in dialogue toward consensus on responsible plant use.

We are doing this work because interest in sacred plants is growing fast, which puts pressure on traditional safety and sustainability approaches. Though most people seem to be benefitting greatly, some people are getting hurt.

The ESC works at points of cultural contact and tension—where global meets local, where ancient meets modern, and sacred meets commercial. We work to minimize the bad, maximize the good, and avoid unintended consequences. We do this through open, honest dialogue giving everyone a voice.

As a young organization, after 15 months of scoping and feedback on the Ayahuasca Dialogues, I want to share some thoughts on who we are, who we are not, and where we want to grow with you.

We are:

- ✓ Supporting responsible ayahuasca wild collection, cultivation, and use, and encouraging deeper international safety and sustainability debates;
- ✓ Serving the people who drink and will drink ayahuasca;
- ✓ Having economic discussions. They can be useful and improve lives;
- ✓ Utilizing our expertise in “resourcery” (sustainable management of resources);
- ✓ Reorienting our work and communications based on individual and community discussions;
- ✓ Multi-lingual. Website: [English/Spanish](#); Ayahuasca Health Guide: [English/Spanish](#); Ayahuasca Dialogues Report: [English](#) (Spanish version coming soon, under review);
- ✓ Fundraising from multiple sources. We have raised ~USD \$58,000. ESC co-founders have donated ~\$15,000 more. In-kind donations far outnumber monetary donations. We have spent ~75% of the money raised, ~39% on research & engagement; ~39% on communications & development; ~13% on education of seekers; ~9% on administration. Our first fiscal year financial report will be released by March following board approval;

We are not:

- × Imposing an agenda. Consensus is voluntary. (We define consensus as the lack of sustained opposition from any stakeholder group.);
- × Representing others. People represent themselves. We do seek community leaders’ supervision of ESC work through our [Stakeholder Representative Council](#). We seek your nominations;
- × Certifying shamans or their healing abilities;



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- × Suggesting that ayahuasca admixture plants are “endangered”. We hope the [#ProtectAya](#) campaign helped bring attention to the need to protect and better understand these plants;
- × Trying to “sanitize” ayahuasca culture. We want people to be safer;
- × Being alarmist. Ayahuasca faces profound threats. We have different and complementary approaches to deal with these threats;
- × Suggesting that South American ayahuasca policies should be changed. We maintain that South American policies are post-prohibitionist models for other governments to follow, but that the global ayahuasca drinking community can do more to address safety and sustainability issues.

In 2015, we will focus on:

- Improving communications, including better listening, clearer messaging, and more multi-lingual resources;
- Educating ayahuasca seekers about ayahuasca safety, sustainability, and reciprocity;
- Increasing the open-endedness of the Ayahuasca Dialogues, including extending the timeline for reaching consensus on the Ayahuasca Agreement;
- Critiquing “seals of approval” or any other activities that could reduce or be seen to reduce personal responsibility or increase unwanted commercialization of traditional cultures;
- Engaging during these coming months in more thorough analysis of possible consequences of ESC work and other activities related to recognizing responsible ayahuasca use.
- Continuing to deepen and extend personal and professional relationships at all levels of the organization, especially amongst academics, Amazonian communities, ayahuasca centers, ayahuasca churches, and with indigenous and other traditional knowledge holders.

Our most important question remains: How can we best serve those who work with and seek ayahuasca? We remain open to all suggestions and welcome your feedback.

We want to work with you and look forward to continued engagement and sustainable growth together!

More questions? Read our [FAQ](#). Or [contact us](#).

Sincerely, on behalf of everyone at the ESC,

Joshua Wickerham

ESC Co-Founder and Executive Director