



January 31, 2015

Dear members of ayahuasca drinking communities, experts, and fellow seekers:

Because the ESC is a community-based initiative, we want to take seriously all input from those involved in ayahuasca practices and who are concerned about its future.

Due to recent critiques by experts who have expressed their serious concerns about the fundamentals of the ESC and its approach, we have decided to put the Ayahuasca Dialogues on hold to go back to basics and engage in an open conversation with everyone who wants to share feedback and critique the ESC's approach and vision. We want to be 100% sure that the ESC constructively serves the future of ayahuasca in the globalized world and is not the cause of unintended consequences. Therefore, it is important to take the necessary time for reflection, analysis, and revision. We will continue to seek relevant experts' guidance at every stage of our work.

The last 15 months of the scoping phase of the Ayahuasca Dialogues has been based on building consensus among all interested groups about the cross-cultural safe use and sustainability of ayahuasca. This originally included some of the signatories of the recent critique. Therefore, for everyone at the ESC, the public criticism has been surprising and difficult to understand. We thought at first it was based on misunderstanding of our approach or message. However, we were wrong. Through continued dialogue with our critics, we realized that we hold significantly different opinions about how the ESC should proceed.

We recognize the wisdom in the [public statement](#) by MAPS, which is entirely consistent with private conversations we have had with MAPS Executive Director Rick Doblin, a member of our Board of Directors. We are prepared to more closely align with their recommendations.

We recognize that some of our language on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) during our Indiegogo campaign, if continued, could have the potential to create unintended negative consequences for ayahuasca drinking communities. For this, we are sorry.

We recognize that some were left with the impression that we thought Amazonian governments should change their policies regarding ayahuasca, which was never our intention. The ESC remains committed to developing evidence of the superiority of Peru's national recognition of traditional ayahuasca practices as an ideal post-prohibitionist example. We look forward to working with partners to encourage adoption of similar approaches by other governments.

We recognize that the initial way we reported our finances was confusing. During our first year, we thought that including in-kind donations was the best way to reflect the level of support for our work and the value of our personal contributions to the project. Going forward, our financial reporting will



always reflect the actual monetary amounts received. We apologize for any confusion. We commit ourselves to providing detailed and transparent accounting of our finances in March 2015.

While we soundly reject the vitriolic tone and ad hominem attacks from a small minority of our critics, we recognize that most critical voices are not coming from a place of anger or personal agendas, but are motivated by our shared goals of ensuring ayahuasca's continued vibrancy for future generations.

We also recognize that the opposition to aspects of our approach is sustained and passionate among a significant group of experts with Amazonian cultural experience far surpassing our own.

It is with all this in mind that we take the following action:

Honoring the ESC's commitment to an inclusive process that proactively seeks out all voices, as of today, we begin a pause in all on-the-ground activities, public communications, and fundraising for the Ayahuasca Dialogues until we have more thoroughly assessed all of our potential actions with feedback from our critics and the wider public.

In order to prepare for this process, we politely ask that the wider ayahuasca community reserve judgment until we begin seeking feedback on substantially reoriented approaches in March. At that time, we will make ourselves available to discuss and debate our approaches all in one place on the Ayahuasca.com forums.

Whatever the outcomes of the future months of dialogue, we commit ourselves to work that will have the highest probability of the most positive outcomes for the greatest number of ayahuasca drinkers, the forests, and our communities.

We thank those who, over the last few weeks, have remained open to dialogue with us, even if they assumed we would not hear them. You know who you are. We thank you for sitting with us, for singing with us, and for breathing with us through the purge.

In Humble Service to the Plants,

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