

ASSESSMENT OF RISKS AND RISK MITIGATION PROPOSALS APPLIED TO THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF THE HUICHOL INDIGENOUS PEOPLE OF MEXICO.

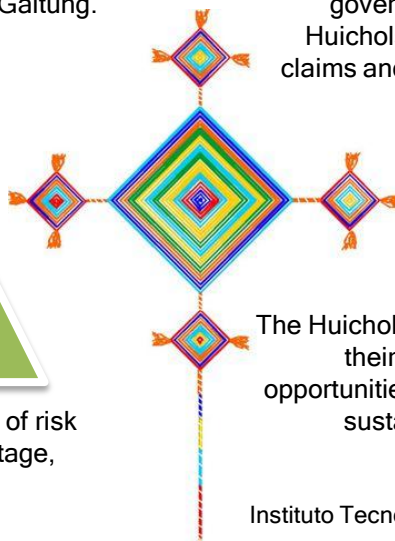
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Introduction

The major risks Indigenous Peoples face in Mexico are man-made and linked to a latent discrimination towards their cultural heritage. In the case of the Huichol people, risks are hidden behind non-comprehensive programs that operate under a framework of authoritarian and paternalistic forms and therefore reproduces structural and cultural violence by imposing inappropriate possibilities for development that do not fit their cultural context. This leads to a forced assimilation and ultimately to impoverishment and loss of the Huichol cultural heritage.



Therefore this work proposes the integration of a framework of risk assessment and management for the Huichol cultural heritage, based on an understanding of the local context.



Structural risks vs. Structural solutions

Structural risks (Socio-political level)	
Vertical structure	Promotes repression
Social arrangements that justify the repressive structure	Promotes cultural violence
Prevents social awareness	Promotes segmentation and marginalization
Conditions reality	Promotes stereotypes and prejudices: discrimination

Structural solutions(Inclusion at the socio-political level)	
Horizontal structure	Promotes social awareness and mobilization (strong and proactive civil society)
Human and indigenous rights respect	Instead of repression
Equity	Instead of exploitation
Autonomy	Instead of imposition
Interaction, dialogue and inclusion	Instead of imposition and marginalization
Recognition and mutual understanding	Instead of imposition and marginalization
New social arrangements	Based in inclusion and active participation of the indigenous communities in the decision making processes

Proposals

These new arrangements will require the integrated efforts of the local government and the private sector, as well as the need of inclusion of the Huichols. By including their traditions and values, and listening to the group claims and development proposals it is possible to achieve an impact in long-term patterns of discrimination.

This inclusion also considers the customary ownership still relevant to the Huichol in order to achieve a durable and sustainable solution concerning the protection of their cultural heritage.

Conclusions

The Huichol cultural heritage is an important asset in providing opportunities for their long-term social development and integration, as well as economic opportunities based in their traditional means of subsistence. This will lead to a sustainable solution that does not compromise their bio-cultural identity.

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What sets worlds in motion is the interplay of differences, their attractions and repulsions. Life is plurality, death is uniformity. By suppressing differences and peculiarities, by eliminating different civilizations and cultures, progress weakens life and favors death, impoverishes and mutilates us. Every view of the world that becomes extinct, every culture that disappears, diminishes a possibility of life. Octavio Paz