

## **ASSESSMENT OF RISKS AND MITIGATION PROPOSALS APPLIED TO THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF THE HUICHOL INDIGENOUS PEOPLE OF MEXICO**

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This paper considers the risks to the cultural heritage of the Huichol Indigenous People in Mexico as well as proposals for risk mitigation. In the case of the Indigenous People in Mexico the major risks posed are manmade and linked to a latent discrimination towards their cultural heritage. In the specific case of the Huichol group, risks are not so evident as with natural disasters, but are rather hidden behind non-comprehensive programs such as those based in an unsustainable ecotourism. These risks are stressed by globalization, integration policies permeated by intolerance, the expansion of trade, access to markets, and private contracts that generate displacement and reallocation. This leads to the urbanization and forced assimilation and ultimately to impoverishment and loss of the Huichol cultural heritage. This constitutes a violation of their cultural property rights.

Therefore this paper proposes the integration of a framework of risk assessment and management for the Huichol cultural heritage, based on an understanding of the local context. This will require the integrated effort of the local government and the private sector, as well as the need of inclusion of the Huichols in the decision-making processes. By including their traditions and values, and listening to the group claims 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 Indigenous Peoples in order to achieve a durable solution concerning the promotion and protection of their cultural heritage. 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 situation that does not compromise their cultural identity or their intrinsic relationship with nature.

### **Keywords**

Huichol cultural heritage, risk assessment, cultural sustainability