

ACRE, BRAZIL · SEPTEMBER 2026

AN INTRODUCTION

Ayahuasca Restoration Foundation

Restoring Ayahuasca, and All Her Guardians

An introduction to the Foundation, the work in Yawanawá territory, and how to take part.

A PROGRAMME OF CÉU DO NOVO MUNDO · EIN 84-1799040

THE PURPOSE

Why this work exists

Some of the oldest wisdom on Earth nearly disappeared once already. The Yawanawá, an Indigenous people of Acre, Brazil, were reduced from roughly five thousand to just over a hundred by the rubber boom and the violence that came with it. The missionary period that followed did to the culture what the rubber boom had done to the people: the language, the ceremonies, the creation stories, the traditional medicines and the Indigenous names were all forbidden, in exchange for medicine for the sick and schooling for the children.

For close to forty years the dieta of Muká, the path through which the people's leaders, healers and knowledge keepers are formed, did not happen once. Around the turn of the millennium, with the missionaries gone, three men entered that dieta again. The culture has been in real rebirth since, and the young are again learning the language, the songs and the ways of preparing medicine.

The global expansion of ayahuasca is a third wave of contact with the outside world. For most of its history there was a balance: the vine and the leaf grew where they were used, the people who prepared the medicine were the people who drank it, and the forest that held them all was cared for as a matter of survival. The expansion has broken that balance. The medicine now flows out of the forest faster than it grows back, and the abundance it creates elsewhere rarely returns to the place it came from.

The Foundation's purpose is to help bring that balance back: for the plants, the people who steward them and the forest they grow in to be left more abundant, not less, by everything the medicine has made possible.

> *In the Yawanawá language there is no word for thank you. Gratitude is enacted, through care for what has been received and for the place it came from. That is what reciprocity means here.*



MARIRI FESTIVAL IN MUTUM

THE STORY SO FAR

Where it comes from

The Foundation grows out of more than a decade of work between its founder, Dennis Notten, and the Yawanawá, above all the village of Mutum, where he first arrived in July 2013 and has spent almost two years in the territory since. The work has been carried by two organisations: Stichting Sananda Wasi, a Dutch foundation (2013 to 2019), and Céu do Novo Mundo, a California 501(c)(3) founded in 2019, within which the planting work became a chapter called Plant a Vine.

Since 2015, roughly $300,000 has been moved into the territory through this work. Together with the community it built small dieta centres and temples at Sete Estrelas, Apiuri and Mutum; the Dieta Center at Mutum in 2018, which the people there call the Muká Center and which has grown into one of the best places in the territory to do dieta; and, beside it, the fornalha and kitchen where medicine is cooked. Five Escolas do Feitio have been held. Across the territory, approximately 2,200 ayahuasca vines and 1,200 chacruna have been planted. That is a gross planting count, not a survival count; what happened to those plantings, and what changes now, is described below.

The Ayahuasca Restoration Foundation is Plant a Vine renamed and widened to four pillars. It operates within Céu do Novo Mundo, with its own funds, projects and records kept clearly distinguishable.



ALEXANDRA PLANTING

THE WORK

The four pillars

Vine and leaf restoration

Nurseries, planting and long-term stewardship of Banisteriopsis caapi and Psychotria viridis. By some estimates, as much as eighty percent of the Amazon's natural vine stock has been depleted in the last fifteen years.

Food sovereignty

In a single generation the Yawanawá have gone from feeding themselves from the forest and the river to depending on rice, sugar and oil carried in by boat. Festivals and visitors brought more hunting and fishing than the land around the villages can carry. Food forests, gardens and traditional crops around the villages are the way back, so that a community opening its doors does not go hungry for it.

Escola do Feitio

The knowledge of cooking the medicine was among the things lost in the missionary decades, and what survived was enough to cook for a village, not for festivals of a hundred and fifty people and ceremonies through the year. The Escola do Feitio brings that knowledge back into the tribe's own hands: training cooks who can prepare medicine well at the scale these times ask for, and building the fornalhas and kitchens that make it possible, without losing what makes the practice sacred.

Ceremonial and hosting infrastructure

When visitors arrive in the territory, the work of receiving them falls on the village: somewhere to sleep, to cook, to sit through the night, water, a place to wash, a roof when the rain comes. For years that work has been carried almost entirely by the people who live there. This pillar is the Foundation's share of it: building, and just as importantly maintaining, the spaces that hold ceremony, teaching, cooking and the people who come to learn. The Dieta Center at Mutum, built in 2018, is the first of these and now needs completing: the dieta houses still have no bathroom, and the huts, kitchen and grounds need renovation. Nothing goes up without a funded plan for keeping it standing.

The four pillars work as one system. Restoration secures the plants, food sovereignty sustains the people who steward them, the Escola turns plants into medicine and carries the knowledge forward, and infrastructure holds the space in which the other three can happen.

THREE RINGS

How the work grows

The work begins at Mutum and moves outward from it, in three rings.

01 ## Mutum first

It is where the founder arrived in 2013, where the Dieta Center and the fornalha stand, where Matsini Yawanawá holds the relationship, and where Davi's first cantero is now in the ground. It is the place where the Foundation learns: which method makes vines survive, what a feitio costs when it is done properly, what it takes to keep a building standing in the forest, how an agreement with a village is made so that it holds. Everything the Foundation does elsewhere is first done here, done well, and written down.

02 ## The Yawanawá territory second

Planting has already begun in Mutum, Yawatxiva, Matrixa, Awavana and Sete Estrelas, and the next step is to carry each of these villages through the same three stages, so that the vine and the leaf grow where the medicine is used across the whole territory rather than in one village. Alongside the planting, at least one more fornalha is built in the territory, and in time several, each with its own Escola do Feitio, so that the knowledge of cooking the medicine lives in more than one place. Each village decides for itself whether it joins, and the plan for the territory is built village by village, with the caciques, in person.

03 ## Other peoples third

The Huni Kuin and other Indigenous peoples of the Amazon carry the same medicine and face the same imbalance. As the method is proved in Yawanawá territory and the Foundation has the people to hold more than one relationship well, the work moves to them — by their invitation, at the pace of trust, and never before the previous ring is standing on its own.

THE PRINCIPLES THE FOUNDATION HOLDS ITSELF TO

Communities are partners and decision makers, not beneficiaries; they hold final authority over their territory, culture and knowledge, and no donation purchases a say in any of that. Expansion happens only by invitation, at the speed of trust rather than the speed of ambition, and Mutum remains the centre of gravity as the circle widens. Nothing is built or planted without a funded plan for its ongoing life. Real work is paid for, whether it is done by the people who guard a nursery, the team that cooks a feitio, or the people who carry the Foundation; goodwill is not a budget line. Where money comes from, what it is used for and who benefits are never obscured, even when the ceremony or knowledge it supports is rightly kept private. The medicine, the ceremonial practice and the sacred knowledge are not for sale, and funding creates no right of access to them.

HONESTLY

What went wrong with the plantings, and what changes now

Since 2015 some 2,200 vines and 1,200 chacruna have been planted across the territory, at a cost above $50,000. The assessment of Davi Nunes de Paula, one of Brazil's most respected medicine makers and the largest planter of ayahuasca vine anywhere, made on one visit and pending a count on the ground this winter, is that most of it has not established.

His explanation is specific. Seedlings travelled from a nursery in Rio Branco by car, boat and wheelbarrow, and the fine hair roots broken in transport never recovered. Cords tied at planting robbed the young vines of the circling on the ground by which they build strength. Vines near paths were cut by people clearing who could not tell a young vine from any other plant. And no follow-up was budgeted. The responsibility is shared, and it has been taken on both sides. Davi lost thousands of vines the same way many years ago and worked out the correction over twenty years.

Davi's method has three stages

I **The cantero.** A nursery bed built in the exact spot where the planting will happen, so the vines are never transported once they have rooted; seedlings rest there in bags for a few months, watered three times a week by guardians who live beside it.

II **Planting out in February,** once the rains have softened the ground, each plant moved only a few metres.

III **About six months later,** clearing the understory and running a cord from each vine to the first branch of its host tree so it climbs into the sun. Follow-up is part of the design.

The first cantero at Mutum was built by Davi's team in September 2026, beside the Dieta Center, and is guarded and watered by a family who live next to it. Davi has offered to plant with the Foundation on his method and to cook the winter's medicine at cost. He has said plainly that this is his life's work and that he is looking for long-term partners.



RIO GREGÓRIO, THE WAY INTO THE TERRITORY



TWO MASTERS IN THE MAKING

DECEMBER 2026 TO MARCH 2027

This winter

The Foundation's founder and its coordinator in the territory, Alexandra Ciobanu, will be on the ground from December. The winter has four pieces of work, and one of film.

THE WINTER'S WORK	NEEDED
Plantation, stage two at Mutum The 1,700 plants in the cantero go into the ground in February, on Davi's method. Logistics and follow-up included.	$10,000
Escola do Feitio with Davi, 10 to 20 December Cooking the medicine for the New Year festival and the months after, at Davi's church in Cruzeiro do Sul, at his cost price. The first session of the Escola with him.	$15,000
Dieta Center at Mutum, first phase Bathrooms for the dieta houses; scope confirmed with Matsini Yawanawá in January. Further phases in 2027.	$15,000
Two people in the territory, three months A contribution toward the costs of Alexandra Ciobanu and Dennis Notten on the ground, $5,000 each.	$10,000
Documentary, first part Filming the four pillars across generations, the material for the philanthropy conversations of 2027.	$15,000
TOTAL NEEDED BY 1 DECEMBER 2026	$65,000



A VINE WE PLANTED IN 2023

What each level does

$25,000 – the commitments to Davi are honoured: the feitio is cooked and the plants go into the ground.

$35,000 – the two people on the ground are covered.

$50,000 – the restoration of the Dieta Center begins.

$65,000 – the first part of the documentary is filmed and the winter is fully funded.

Already paid, outside this total: the first cantero at Mutum and the recovery of an earlier planting at Yawatxiva.

Timeline in brief: feitio with Davi 10 to 20 December; Mariri Festival in Mutum 31 December to 5 January; working days in January, including a count and photographs of what survived from earlier plantings so that an honest survival figure can finally be published; stage two planting in February; agreements with the village on the coming year, in person.



DENNIS COOKING MEDICINE AT THE FORNALHA IN MUTUM

THE FIRST FULL YEAR

2027

Why this year. For most of 2027, Dennis Notten and Alexandra Ciobanu will be living in the territory rather than visiting it — through the feitio and the festival in December, the planting in February, the dieta season, and again for the conference in November. That has not been true in any year since this work began. It means the agreements can be made in person and kept in person; the plantings can be counted, photographed and followed rather than reported from a distance; and the whole arc — what was done since 2013, what is being done now, and what comes next — can be documented properly for the first time, on film and in writing. In November 2027 the Indigenous Ayahuasca Conference comes to Aldeia Sagrada, in Yawanawá territory. The Foundation intends to stand there, in front of the wider medicine community from around the world, with a year of work that can be seen and a record that can be checked. Funding the year before it begins is what makes that possible.

2027 is shown as what each level of money does rather than as one number. The programme ceiling is $300,000; beyond that the Foundation would be taking money faster than it can be turned into work done well.

At Mutum, the year looks like this. In September the vines planted in February reach stage three: the understory is cleared and each vine is guided onto its host tree, and the first honest count of what has taken is made. Two feitios are cooked with Davi, mid-year and in December, each one a session of the Escola do Feitio with the village's own cooks at the fire. The Dieta Center moves through its next phases at the pace Matsini sets: sanitation first, then the huts, the kitchen and the grounds, so that the centre built in 2018 is finished. If the full programme is funded, a permanent feitio house is built at Mutum, so medicine can be made in the village every year without rebuilding the fires. Beyond Mutum, the same three-stage planting continues in the other Yawanawá villages where it has already begun, and starts in two to four more, each one by its own invitation, with a small wage for the people who look after the plants.



BANISTERIOPSIS CAAPI

2027

The programme

THE 2027 PROGRAMME	BUDGET
Feitio house at Mutum Written quote pending; 2027 or 2028.	$60,000
Two feitios with Davi Mid-year and December.	$30,000
Plantation Stage three at Mutum in September; the other villages through stages one and two; a small wage for the people who look after the plants.	$40,000
Dieta Center at Mutum Continuing restoration: sanitation, huts, kitchen, grounds. Phased into 2028.	$40,000
Compensation, the two people carrying the work On equal terms; a proposal pending approval by the Foundation's circle. Falls with the funding below the full programme.	$80–100,000
Operations, travel, administration, buffer	$30,000
PROGRAMME CEILING	$300,000

At $150,000: two feitios with Davi, Mutum carried through stage three, two more villages planted through stages one and two, the Dieta Center continued at a modest pace. No feitio house at this level.

At $300,000: the full programme runs. If the year is funded before the winter, the agreements can be made in person with Matsini, Davi and the caciques of the villages that want to plant, which is what makes them hold.

The film. A feature documentary on the Foundation, filmed across the four pillars, is a separate campaign with its own budget, lead and donors, so that the projects never depend on the film and the film can find the people who want to make it. Working envelope about $200,000. In November 2027 the Indigenous Ayahuasca Conference comes to Aldeia Sagrada in Yawanawá territory; the aim is to stand there with the year's work visible and a film that shows it.

THE PEOPLE

Who carries it

Dennis Notten, founder, has worked with the Yawanawá since 2013 and has spent two years of his life in dieta in the territory and beyond it. He holds the relationships, the structure and the records, and leads the Foundation.

Alexandra Ciobanu coordinates everything that happens in the territory. Fluent in Portuguese and respected across the tribe, she is the daily channel to Matsini and the village. She is a director of Céu do Novo Mundo and has been part of this work since 2022.

Around them the Foundation is taking shape as two circles: an inner circle that carries administration, finance, compliance, fundraising and the documentary, and a Board of Advisors that meets several times a year to hear what is happening and to bring ideas, introductions and support. Its members come from philanthropy, business, medicine and the ceremonial world, and several will be in the territory this winter to see the work with their own eyes.

Partners in the territory: Matsini Yawanawá, who holds Mutum and the Dieta Center; Davi Nunes de Paula and his team, who run the feitio and the plantation stages. A written, costed joint project between Céu do Novo Mundo, Davi's cultural association and the Yawanawá association is being prepared for approval before execution.



TATÁ TXANU YAWANAWÁ (1913–2016), ONE OF THE LAST ELDERS TO CARRY THE OLD KNOWLEDGE THROUGH THE MISSIONARY YEARS

AN INVITATION

How to take part

2027 is a rare year: two people on the ground for most of it, a partner in Davi who is offering his method and his medicine at cost, and a conference in the territory in November where the work can be shown to the world. The Foundation is asking for support to make that year real.

There are three ways to answer: a gift toward this winter, a pledge toward 2027, or an introduction to someone who should be in this conversation. Contributions of any size are welcome. After the winter, a short and honest report goes to everyone who took part: what was cooked, what was planted, what survived from before and what did not, what was decided at the Dieta Center, and where the money went.

Céu do Novo Mundo is a US 501(c)(3), EIN 84-1799040. Gifts are tax deductible for US taxpayers to the extent allowed by law. Donors outside the United States can give by the same routes; there is no US deduction, and other options can be discussed.

WAYS OF GIVING

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